

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#0
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE



⌘

CRAFTON
Sotelo

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE ZERO

Story: J.T. Krul

Pencils: Marcus To - Inks: Saleem Crawford - Colors: Beth Sotelo

Letters: Josh Reed

Soulfire Created by: Michael Turner

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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™ Vol. 2 Issue 0

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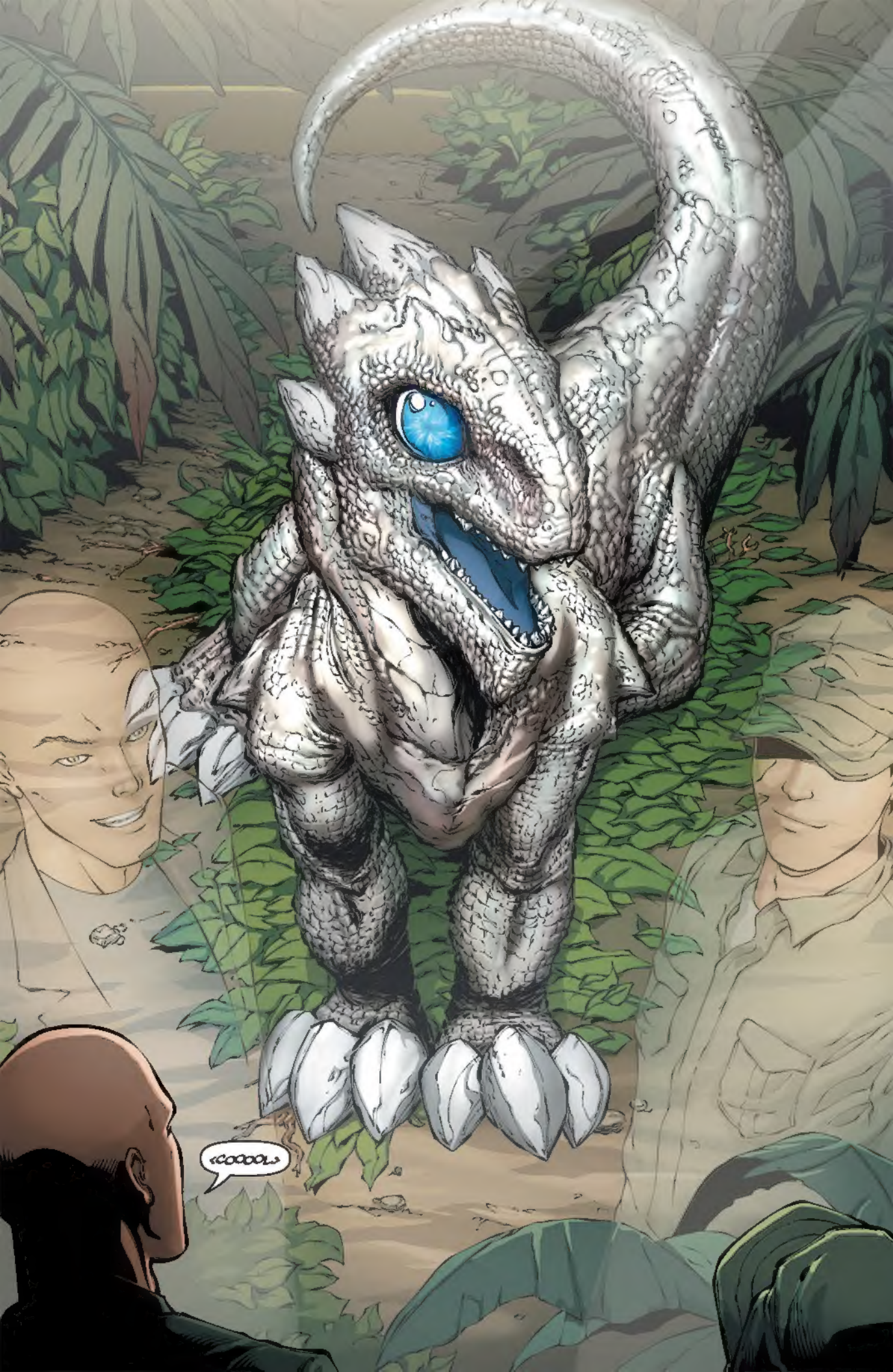
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*[TRANSLATED
FROM CHINESE.]







cocoool



coooo!



SOMETIMES CHANGE CAN BE AN EARTH-SHATTERING EVENT THAT ROCKS THE ENTIRE PLANET TO ITS CORE...

...OTHER TIMES, IT CAN BE SO SUBTLE AS TO TAKE HOLD JUST BELOW THE SURFACE WHERE ONLY THE KEENEST OBSERVERS CAN BEAR WITNESS.



ONCE AGAIN, THE LIGHT SHINES AND MAGIC COURSES THROUGH EVERY CORNER OF THIS WORLD. AND YET, MOST OF THE PEOPLE ARE STILL SHUFFLING AROUND IN THE DARK, UNABLE TO SEE THE SIGNS.



LOOK OUT BELOW!

BUT THAT WON'T LAST LONG.





DAMN...
NINETY-EIGHT
FEET!

NOT BAD. I
WAS GONNA WAIT
EVEN LONGER BUT
YOU LOOKED
NERVOUS.

NO WAY,
MAN. I KNOW YOU
GOT MY BACK...
LITERALLY.

I BET WE
COULD HIT
FIFTY!

THAT SOUNDS
AN AWFUL LOT LIKE
A CHALLENGE, P.J.

IT IS.

I'M GAME IF
YOU ARE.

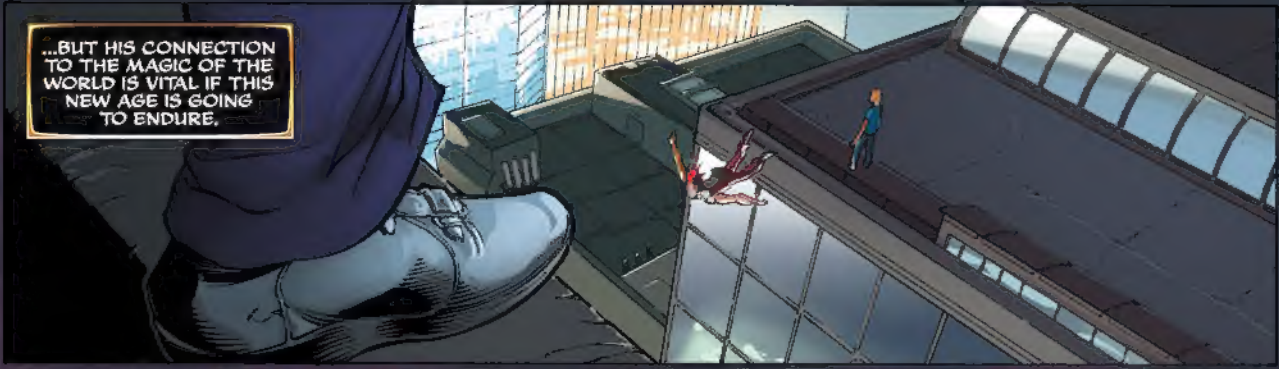


I HAVE ROAMED THIS WORLD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, WAITING THROUGH THE DARK AGES FOR THE LIGHT OF **MAGIC** TO RETURN. AND THOUGH HIS SPIRIT IS OLD AND STRONG, I SOMETIMES FORGET THAT **MALIKAI** IS JUST A BOY.

MALIKAI DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IN FULFILLING HIS ROLE AS THE **SAMUSARA- THE BRINGER OF THE LIGHT**. IT IS LARGELY DUE TO HIM THAT THE **MAGIC** HAS BEEN REPLENISHED.

HE SURVIVED THE **RITUAL OF THE FIVE MASTERS** AND EVEN DEFEATED THE TYRANNICAL **RAINIER**, A MONSTER WHO HAS BEEN AT WAR WITH THE **MAGIC** ITSELF SINCE AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER.

I WISH I COULD TELL **MALIKAI** THAT HIS JOURNEY HAS ENDED, AND THAT HIS DIFFICULT DAYS WERE BEHIND HIM....



...BUT HIS CONNECTION
TO THE MAGIC OF THE
WORLD IS VITAL IF THIS
NEW AGE IS GOING
TO ENDURE.



I HOPE MALIKAI CAN
ENJOY THIS SMALL
RESPITE WITH THOSE
CLOSEST TO HIM.



AS FOR ME... WITH MAGIC
SURFACING AROUND THE
WORLD, THERE CAN BE
NO SUCH BREAK.

IT IS MY
DUTY.



YOU OKAY?

I THINK I
TWEAKED IT
DURING THE
LANDING.

THAT'S THE
PRICE YOU PAY FOR
SETTING A NEW
RECORD.

YOU
TWO ARE
REAL IDIOTS.
YOU KNOW
THAT?

COULD
BE A TORN
COUPLING.

THAT'S
WHAT I WAS
THINKING,
BENOIST.

WE'LL TAKE A
LOOK AT IT WHEN
WE GET BACK,
TONIGHT. MAKE
SURE IT'S FULLY
FUNCTIONAL.

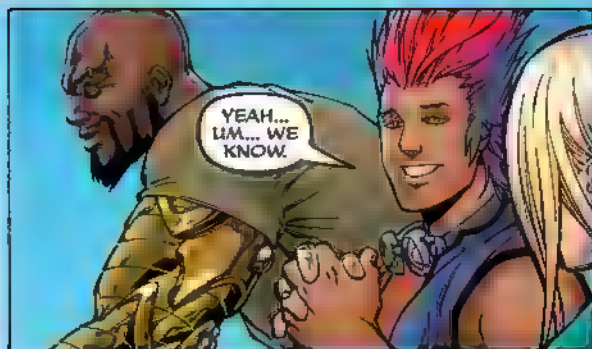
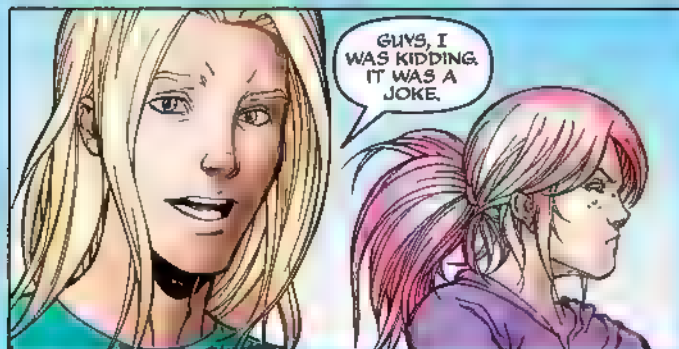
COME ON,
DON'T LOOK
AT ME LIKE
THAT.

WHAT IF YOU
WOULD HAVE LOST HIM
IN THE FOG? OR DIDN'T
HAVE THE STRENGTH TO
STOP IN TIME? OR... OR
JUST MISSED CATCHING
HIM ALTOGETHER?

AND YOU
WONDER *WHY* I WON'T
LET YOU TAKE ME ON
ONE OF YOUR MAGICAL
CARPET RIDES.

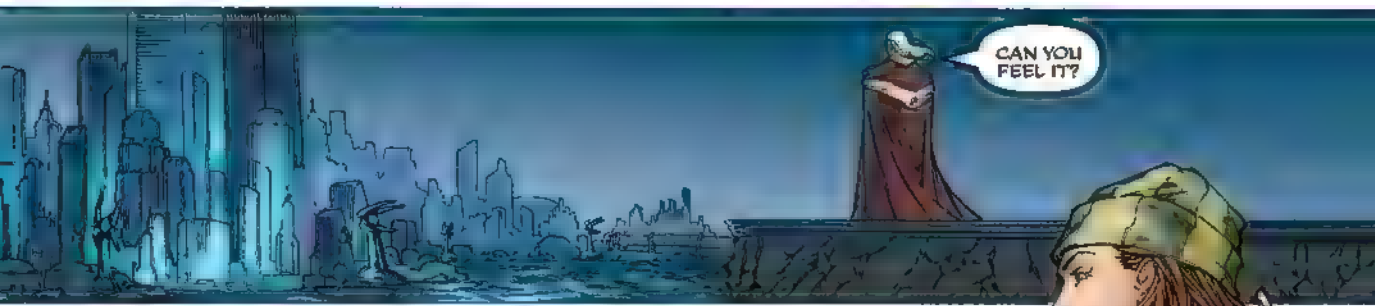
COME ON,
SONIA. NOTHING
HAPPENED. I
HAD IT UNDER
CONTROL.

BESIDES,
IF I DID MISS HIM,
I COULD ALWAYS USE
MY *MAGIC* TO GO BACK
IN TIME AND SET
THINGS RIGHT.





SAN FRANCISCO, NORTHWEST
CONFERENCE

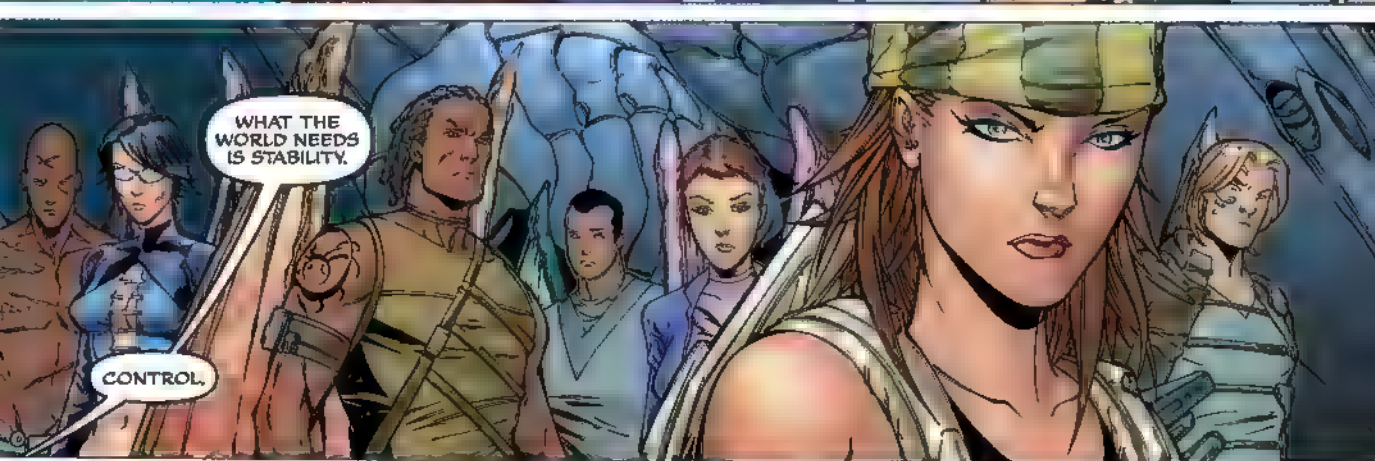


CAN YOU
FEEL IT?



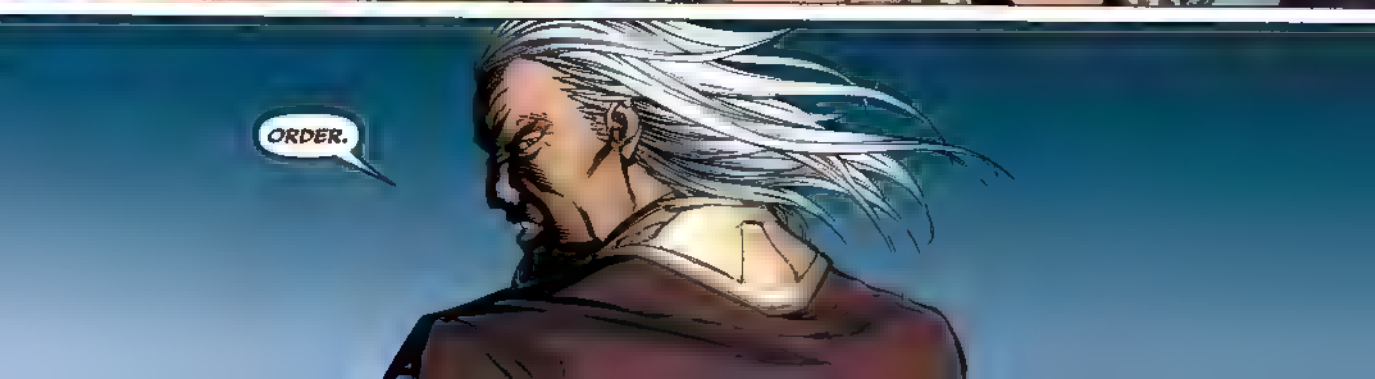
CAN YOU FEEL
THE CHANGE,
BLACKJACK?

SUCH RAW POWER
IS RUNNING LOOSE IN
THE WORLD AGAIN. I'VE
SEEN IT BEFORE. LEFT
UNCONTROLLED, IT CAN
LEAD TO LITTER
CHAOS.



WHAT THE
WORLD NEEDS
IS STABILITY.

CONTROL.



ORDER.



AND I
WILL PROVIDE
IT.

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#1
OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE™





VOL. 2

#1

OF 9
COVER B

SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE ONE OF NINE

Story: **Jim Krul**

Pencils: **Marcus To - Inna Saleem Crawford**

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Soulfire Created by **Michael Turner**

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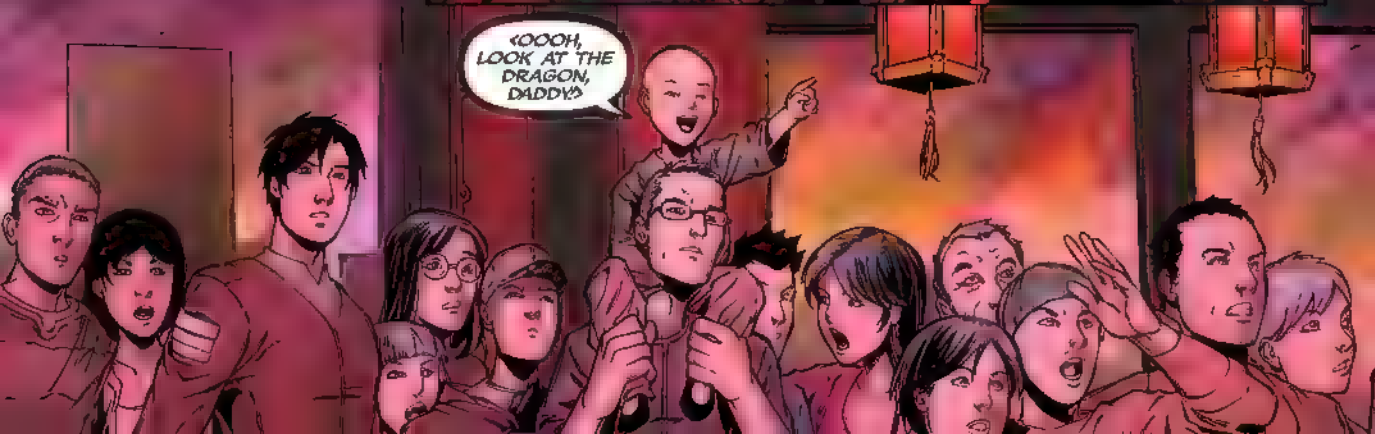
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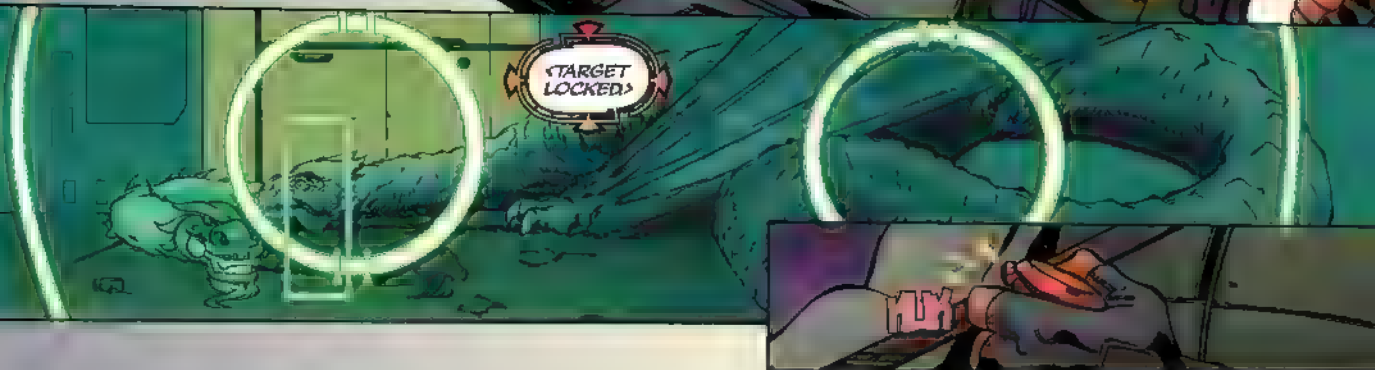
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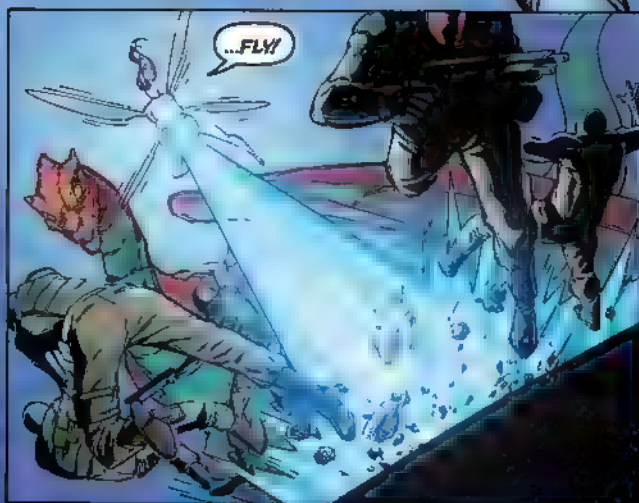
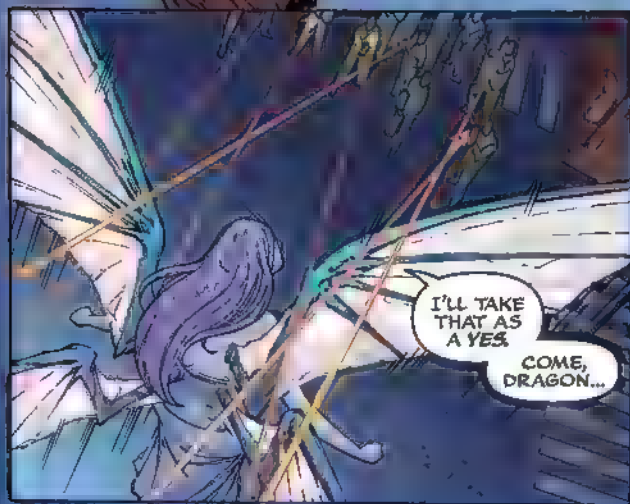
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SIT DOWN,
CLOWNS.

KRAAATK

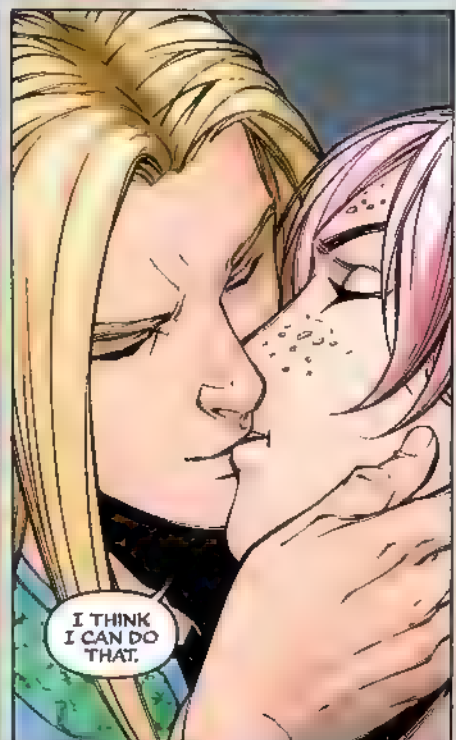
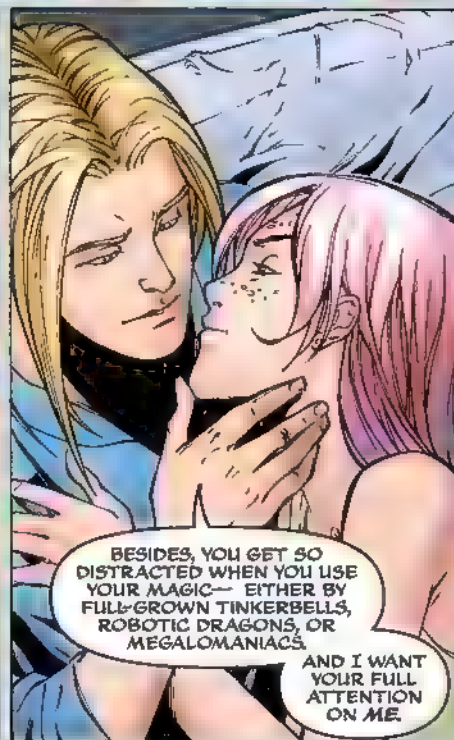
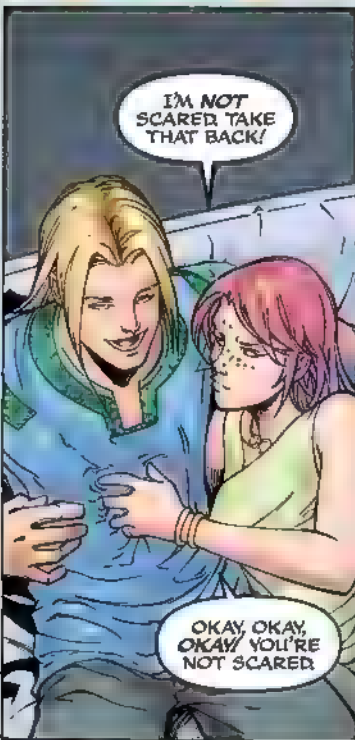
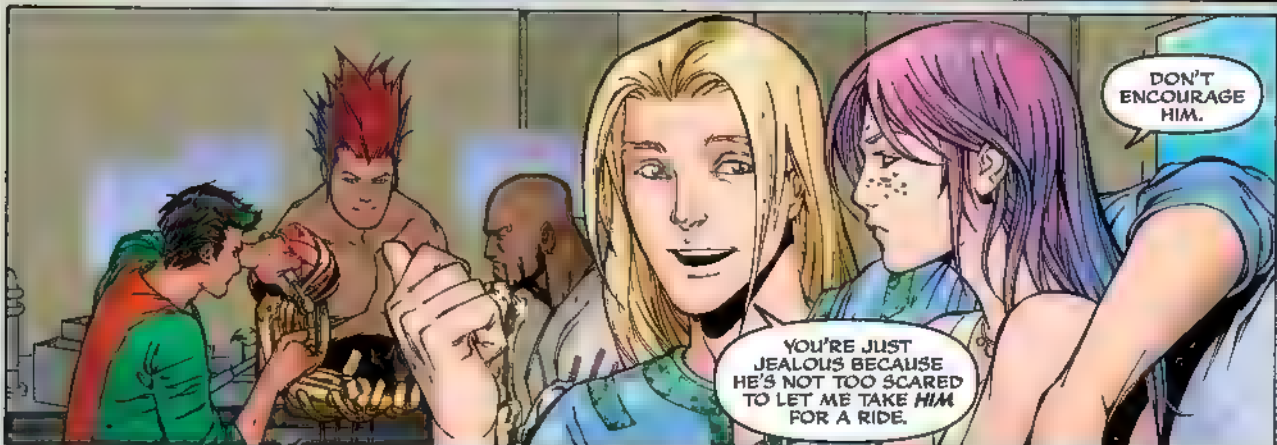
ROAR

EASY, BIG
FELLA.

GRACE,
LET'S GO!

THAT WENT...
WELL.

THE DRAGON IS
ALIVE. THAT IS ALL
THAT MATTERS,
SEPH.



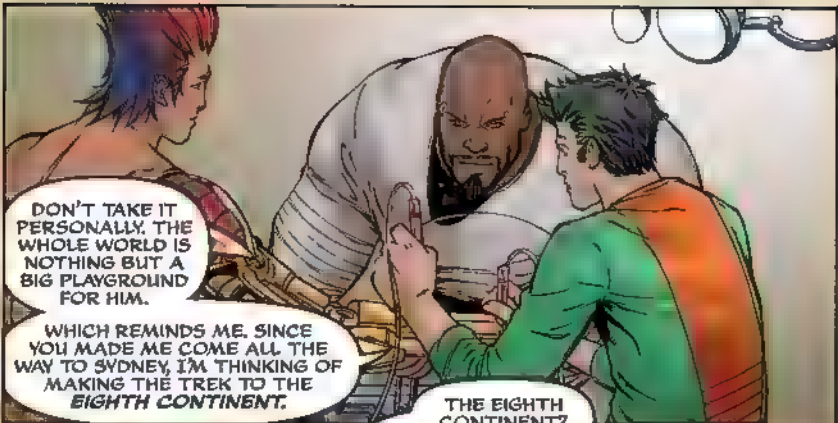


THE TENDRIL CABLE KEEPS TEARING. LET'S SWITCH TO A COIL FIBER CABLE.

GOOD IDEA, DYLAN. I KNEW YOU'D BE ABLE TO HELP ME SORT OUT THE KINKS IN THIS NEW PROTOTYPE.

PROTOTYPE? SO, I'M JUST A BIG GUINEA PIG TO YOU, BENOIST?

YEP.



DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY. THE WHOLE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT A BIG PLAYGROUND FOR HIM.

WHICH REMINDS ME, SINCE YOU MADE ME COME ALL THE WAY TO SYDNEY, I'M THINKING OF MAKING THE TREK TO THE EIGHTH CONTINENT.

THE EIGHTH CONTINENT? WHAT'S THAT?



IT'S THE WORLD'S LARGEST JUNKYARD, LOCATED JUST OFF THE AUSTRALIAN COAST. I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE IN YEARS.

A FRIEND OF MINE ACTUALLY CALLS IT HOME. I MET GABRIEL BACK WHEN I WAS ABOUT YOUR AGE. HE WAS THE SMARTEST MAN I EVER LEARNED FROM. IT'D BE GOOD TO SEE HIM AGAIN.

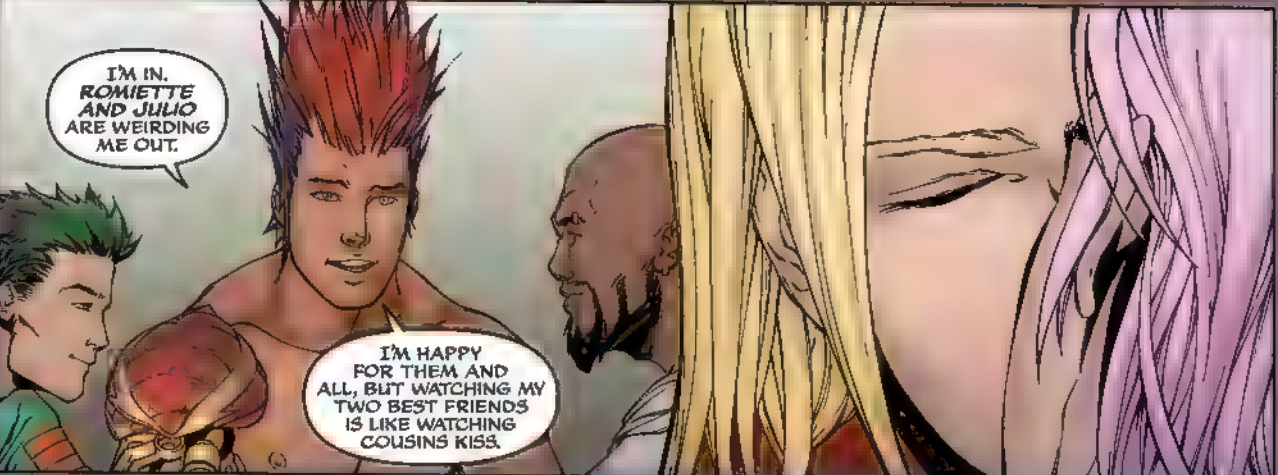
SO, IT'S A DUMP THEN? SOUNDS... AWESOME.



NO, MAN. THINK ABOUT IT. IT'S THE ULTIMATE SCRAP YARD. A VIRTUAL ISLAND OF EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING YOU COULD NEED TO BUILD WHATEVER YOU CAN COOK UP IN YOUR HEAD.

IT'S CANDYLAND FOR TECHIES AND GEARHEADS.

WHAT DO YA SAY?



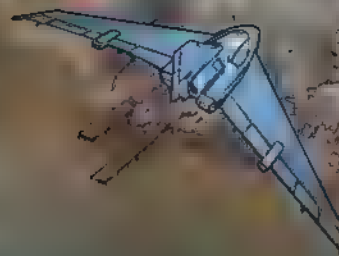
I'M IN. ROMIETTE AND JULIO ARE WEIRDING ME OUT.

I'M HAPPY FOR THEM AND ALL, BUT WATCHING MY TWO BEST FRIENDS IS LIKE WATCHING COUSINS KISS.



NOW, I KNOW
WHY THEY CALL IT
A CONTINENT...

IT'S HUGE!



I DIDN'T
KNOW THE AUSSIES
PRODUCED SO
MUCH WASTE.

THEY DON'T INITIALLY,
THE PROJECT WAS MEANT
TO SOLVE THE COUNTRY'S
LANDFILL WOES, BUT THEY SOON
REALIZED THEY COULD TURN IT
INTO AN ECONOMIC BOON BY
TAKING ON REFUSE FROM
COUNTRIES AROUND
THE GLOBE.

MY UNCLE RUNS A
FACILITY BACK IN JAPAN.
WASTE MANAGEMENT
IS A CASH COW
THESE DAYS.



CHECK IT OUT, THERE'S A
500 SERIES TERMINAL BOARD JUST
LYING OVER THERE! I HAVEN'T
SEEN ONE OF THOSE SINCE
I WAS LIKE TWELVE.

DUDE, I SEE
LIKE, A WHOLE PILE
OF THEM OVER
THERE!

NOW THIS PLACE
CAN BE A LOT OF FUN,
I REALIZE THAT, BUT
STICK BY MY SIDE.
BOTH OF YOU.

JUST AS THE POWERS THAT
BE DON'T CARE WHAT GOES INTO
THIS PLACE, THEY ALSO COULD CARE
LESS FOR WHAT GOES ON IN HERE.
WHAT I MEAN IS... LAW AND ORDER
ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY, SO WATCH
YOURSELVES, OKAY?

NEVER GET ALL PATERNAL
BEFORE, KIND OF
A KILLJOY.



TELL ME ABOUT IT
HAPPENS EVERY SO OFTEN...
WE ALL JUST TRY TO IGNORE
IT, FIGURE IT'S THE BEST WAY
TO GET IT OUT OF
HIS SYSTEM.

I CAN
HEAR YOU.



SOUNDS
LIKE A GOOD
IDEA.

GABRIEL!

I GUESS I'VE
BEEN AWAY LONGER
THAN I THOUGHT.
THIS WASN'T HERE
LAST TIME.

NEIGHBORHOOD
MUST BE GOING
TO HELL.

SO, DO
WE KNOCK OR
SOMETHING?

HERE COMES
SOMEBODY.
AND FAST!

PRIVATE
PROPERTY
FELLAS.
ERGO... GET
LOST!



GET AWAY FROM THEM...

...HUH???

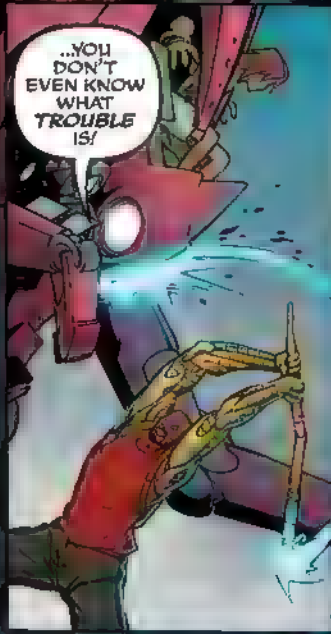


BET YOU THINK YOU'RE A BIG GUY, DON'T YA?

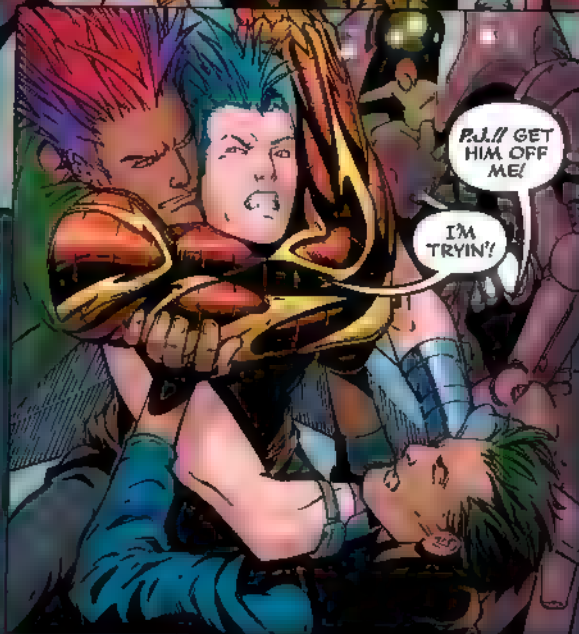
NOW, JUST TAKE IT EASY!

IF YOU CAME LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE, YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE.

KID...



...YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TROUBLE IS!

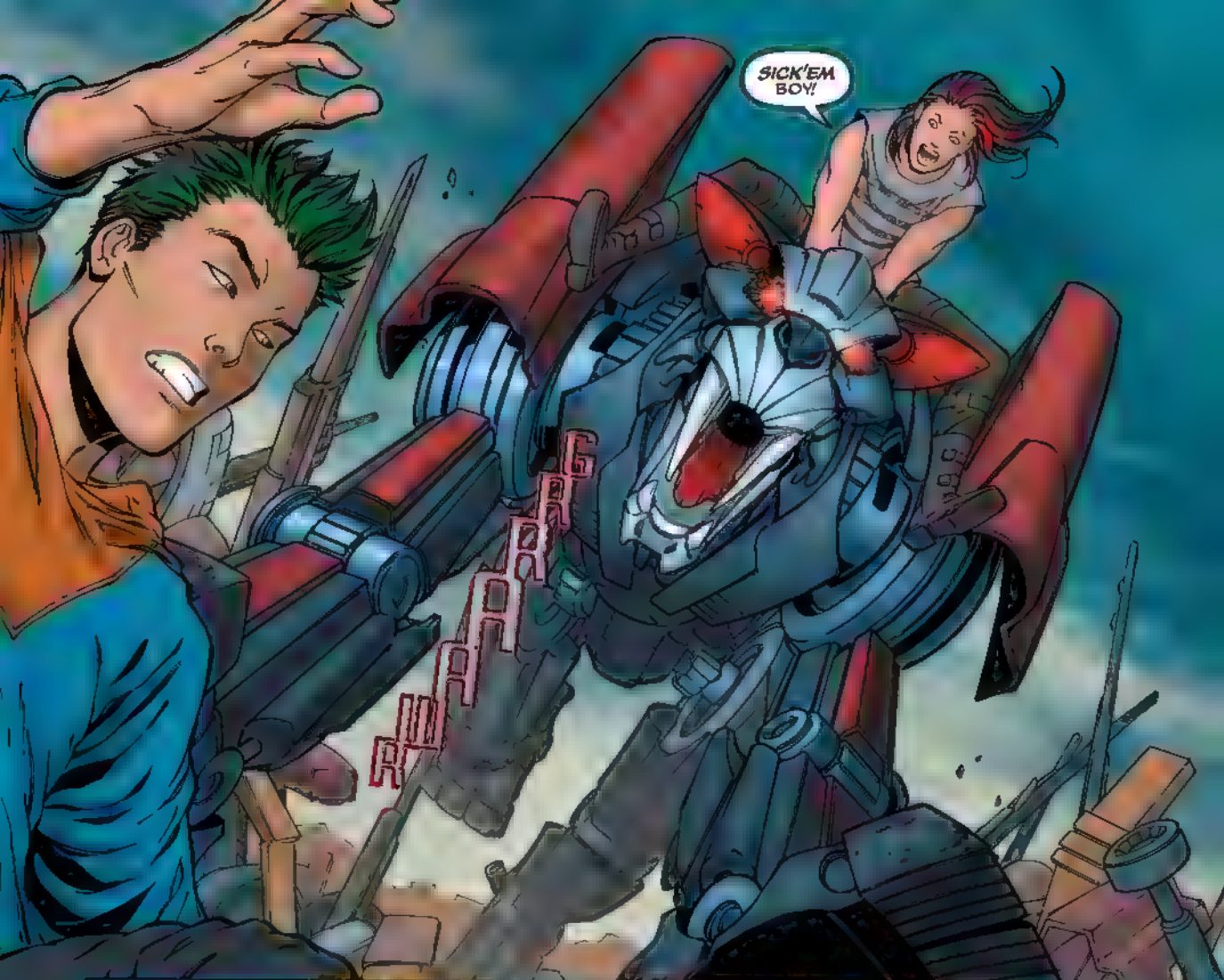


P.J.!! GET HIM OFF ME!

I'M TRYIN'!

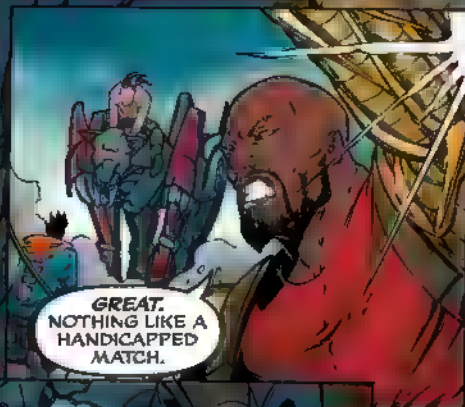


DYLAN!! BEHIND YOU!



SICK'EM
BOY!

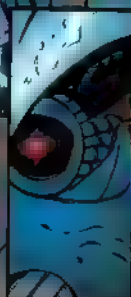
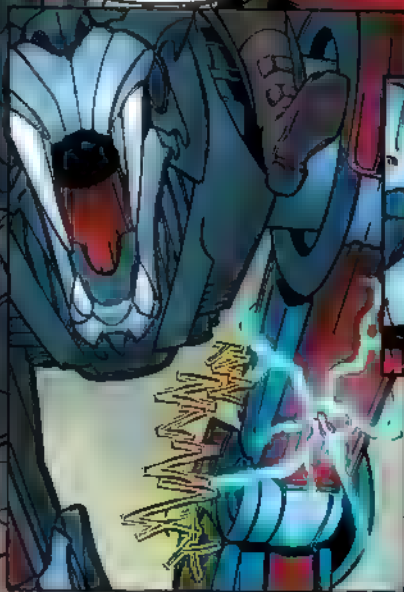
ARRRR



GREAT.
NOTHING LIKE A
HANDICAPPED
MATCH.



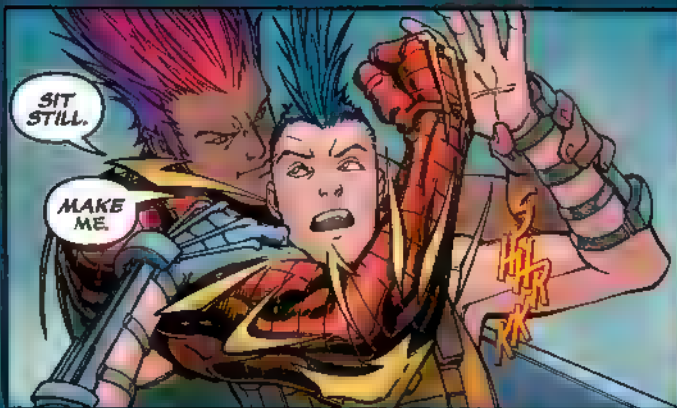
GOOD THING
I'M DESIGNED FOR
MULTITASKING.



HEY!!!

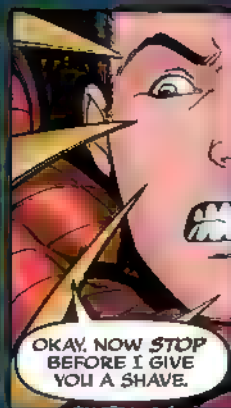


NOT SO TOUGH WITHOUT ROVER, ARE YA?

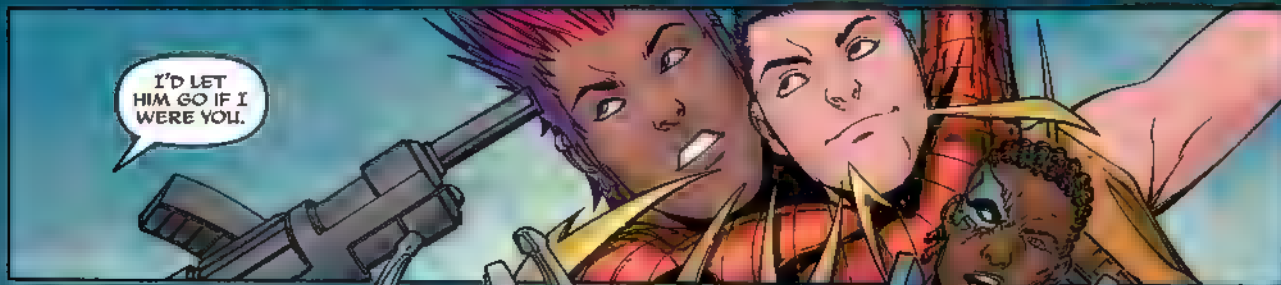


SIT STILL.

MAKE ME.



OKAY, NOW STOP BEFORE I GIVE YOU A SHAVE.

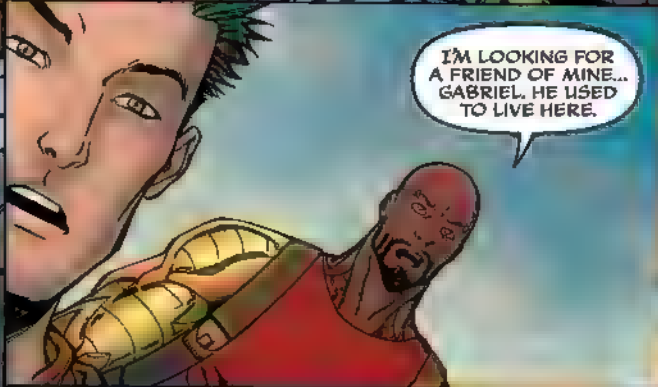


I'D LET HIM GO IF I WERE YOU.



TECHNOLOGY'S AMAZING IN GIVING US ALL KINDS OF REPLACEMENT PARTS, BUT AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A CYBERNETIC HEAD

NAME'S JAKOBI. YOU GUYS ARE TRESPASSIN'.

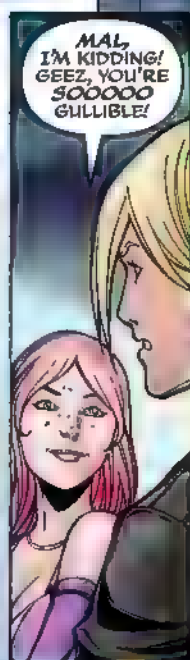
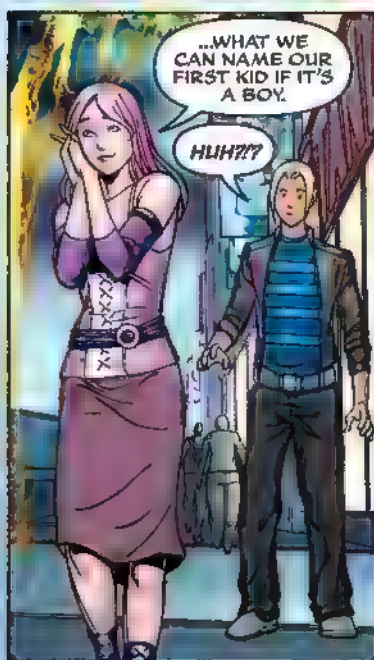
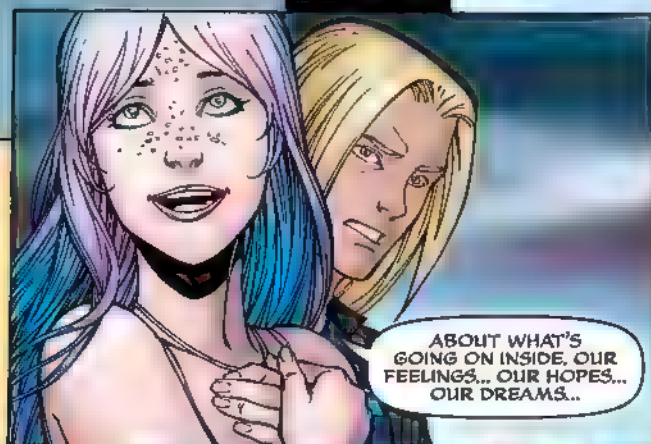
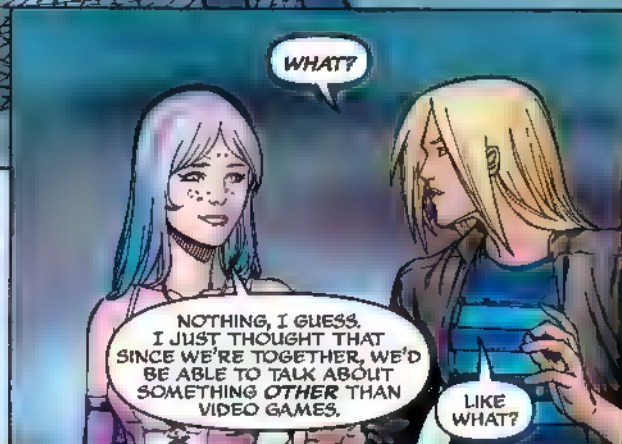


I'M LOOKING FOR A FRIEND OF MINE... GABRIEL. HE USED TO LIVE HERE.



STILL DOES, BUT GABRIEL'S WORKING ON A TOP-SECRET PROJECT, WHICH MEANS NO VISITORS, EVEN OLD FRIENDS.

SO PISS OFF.





--DON'T ACCEPT ME FOR WHAT I AM! I'M JUST NOT LIKE YOU, DEREK.

HOW CAN YOU BE THIS WAY, JAYDEN? HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME???

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU, OKAY? THIS IS ABOUT ME!



JUST LET GO OF ME.

MAL, DON'T.

IS EVERYTHING OKAY HERE?



WHY DON'T YOU JUST FOCUS ON YOUR GIRL AND STAY OUT OF THIS. IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

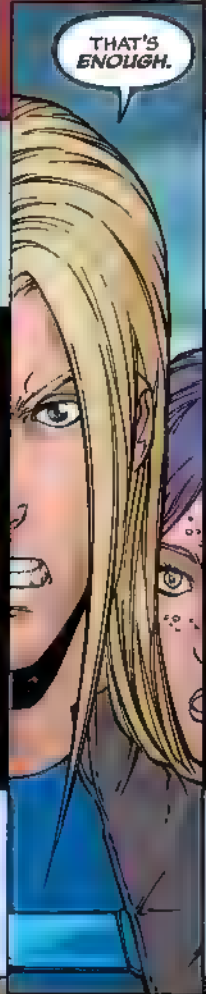
COME ON, MAN. YOU'RE HURTING HER.

I'M HURTING HER? THAT'S A FRIGGIN' RIOT.

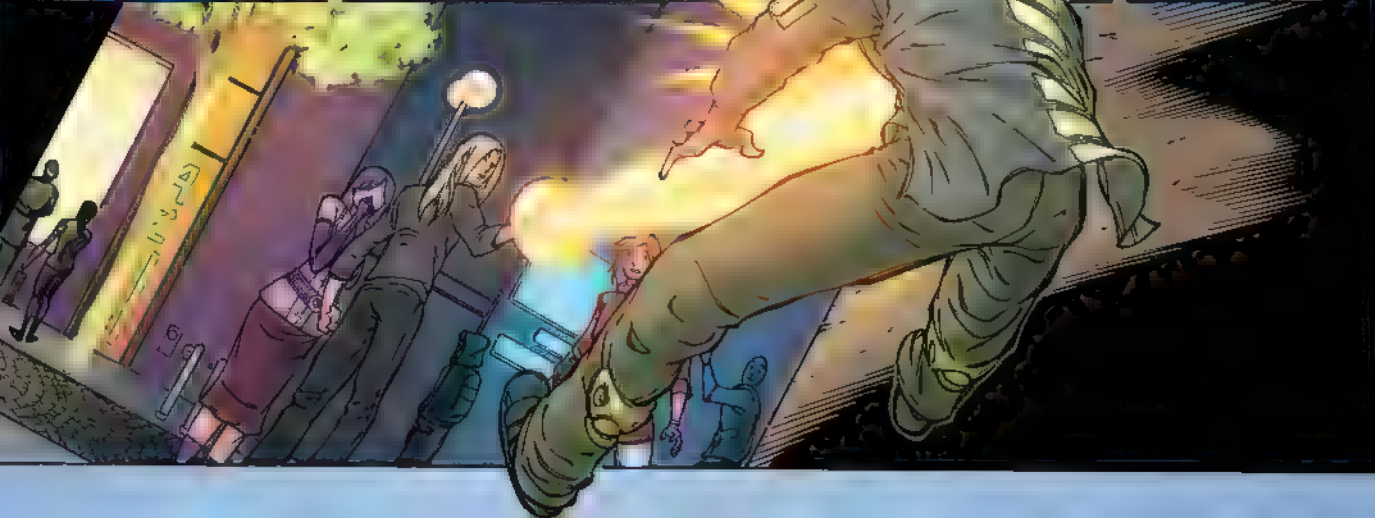
DEREK...



OW!!!



THAT'S ENOUGH.



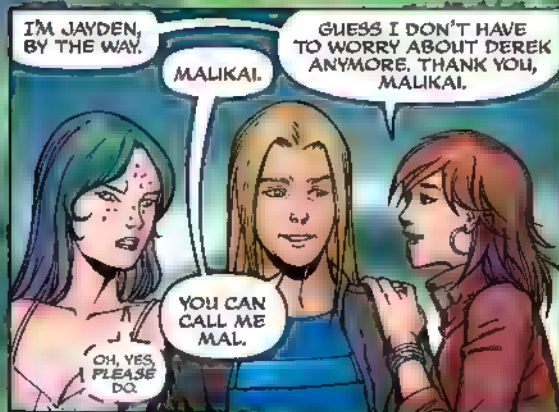


THAT WAS AMAZING! HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

IT WAS NOTHING, REALLY.

KIND OF HARSH, IF YOU ASK ME, YOU COULD HAVE REALLY HURT THAT GUY.

WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO, SONIA? LET HIM RIP HER ARM OFF?



I'M JAYDEN, BY THE WAY.

MALIKAI.

GUESS I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT DEREK ANYMORE. THANK YOU, MALIKAI.

YOU CAN CALL ME MAL.

OH, YES, PLEASE DO.

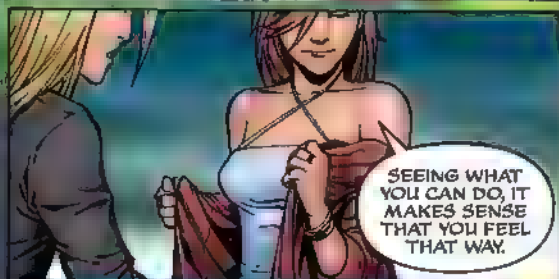


YOU GONNA BE OKAY?

YEAH, SURE. I JUST THOUGHT DEREK WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER BOYS.

WHEN HE FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT ME, HE KIND OF FREAKED.

NOTHING COULD JUSTIFY THE WAY HE WAS TREATING YOU.



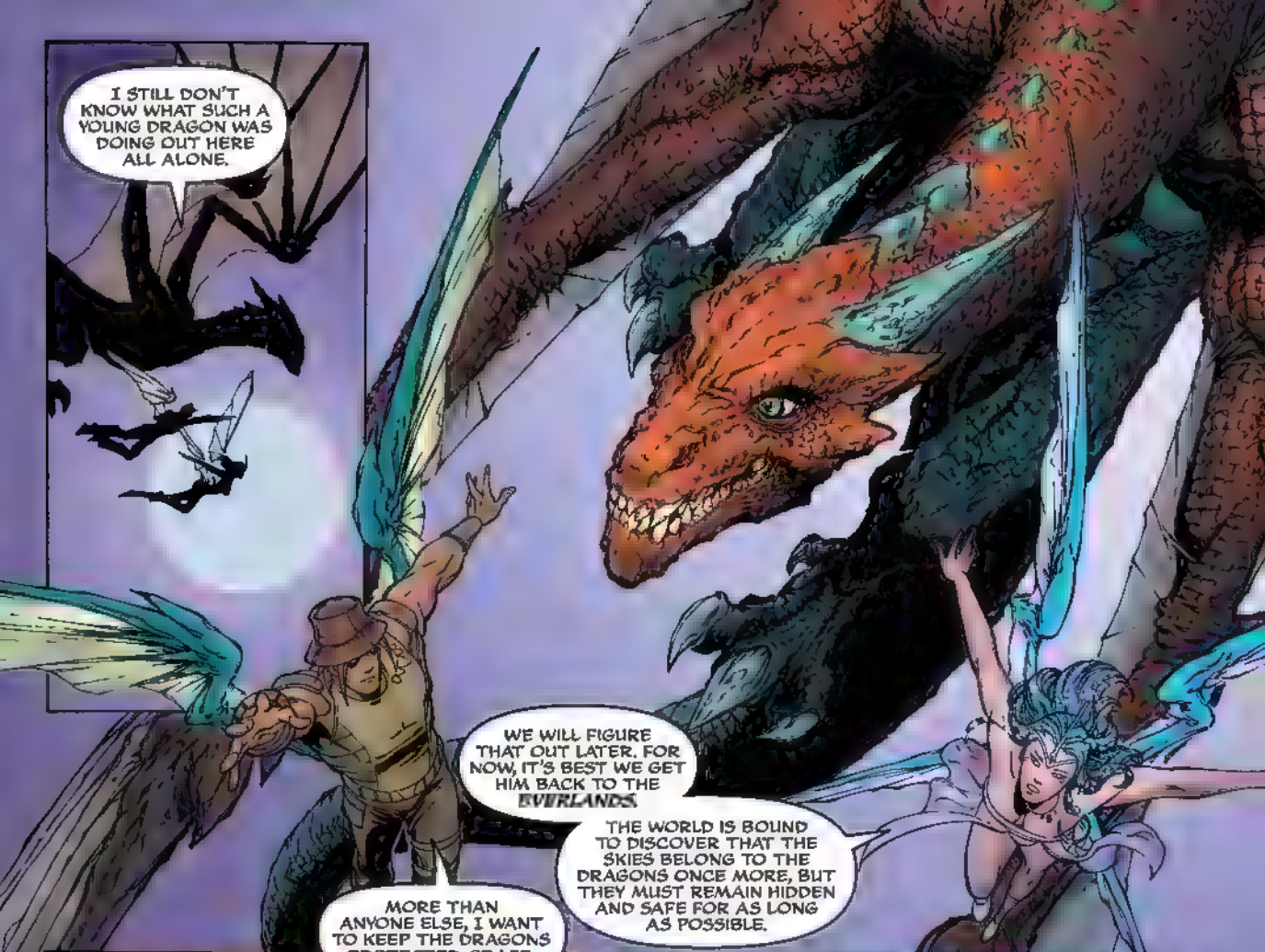
SEEING WHAT YOU CAN DO, IT MAKES SENSE THAT YOU FEEL THAT WAY.



MAYBE YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE DIFFERENT, TOO.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, JAYDEN... I DO.

THIS JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.

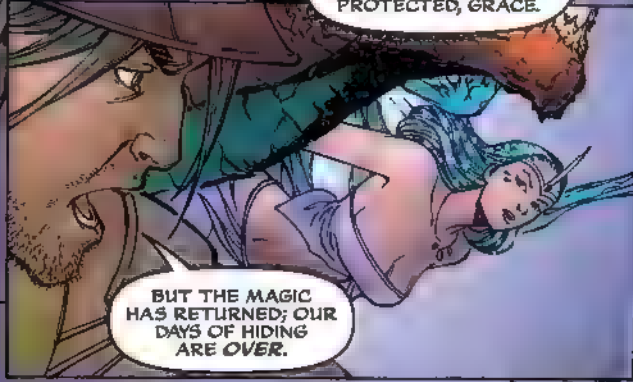


I STILL DON'T
KNOW WHAT SUCH A
YOUNG DRAGON WAS
DOING OUT HERE
ALL ALONE.

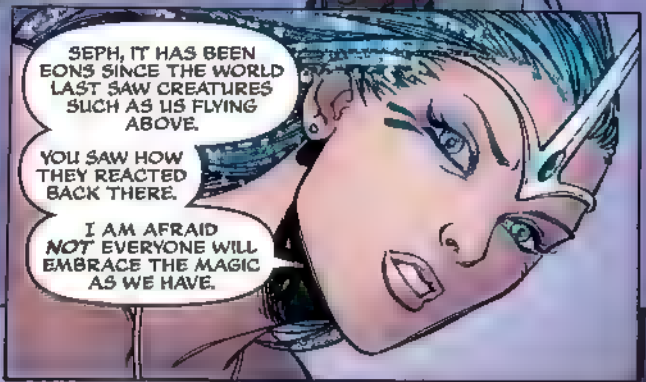
WE WILL FIGURE
THAT OUT LATER. FOR
NOW, IT'S BEST WE GET
HIM BACK TO THE
EVERLANDS

MORE THAN
ANYONE ELSE, I WANT
TO KEEP THE DRAGONS
PROTECTED, GRACE.

THE WORLD IS BOUND
TO DISCOVER THAT THE
SKIES BELONG TO THE
DRAGONS ONCE MORE, BUT
THEY MUST REMAIN HIDDEN
AND SAFE FOR AS LONG
AS POSSIBLE.



BUT THE MAGIC
HAS RETURNED; OUR
DAYS OF HIDING
ARE OVER.



SEPH, IT HAS BEEN
EONS SINCE THE WORLD
LAST SAW CREATURES
SUCH AS US FLYING
ABOVE.

YOU SAW HOW
THEY REACTED
BACK THERE.

I AM AFRAID
NOT EVERYONE WILL
EMBRACE THE MAGIC
AS WE HAVE.



WHAT'S
THE MATTER
WITH HIM?

SKRUEE



I REMEMBER THOSE DAYS
OF YESTERYEAR WHEN
MAGIC SURGED THROUGH
THE LANDS AND DRAGONS
FILLED THE SKIES.

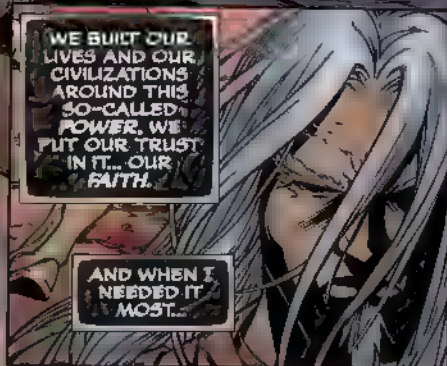
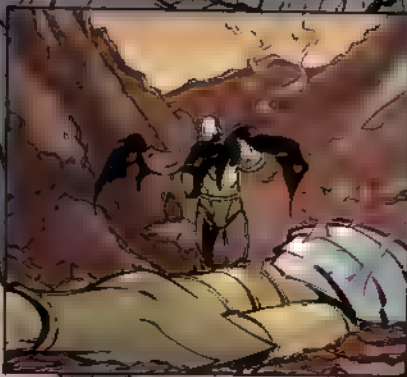
SOME LIKED TO THINK OF
THAT TIME AS BEING ONE OF
BEAUTY AND WONDER, BUT IN
TRUTH, THOSE DAYS WERE
LIKE ANY OTHER-- DARK
AND VIOLENT.

IF YOU DIDN'T STAND
VICTORIOUS, YOU
WERE CAST ABOUT IN
RUINS, SLAUGHTERED
IN DEFEAT.



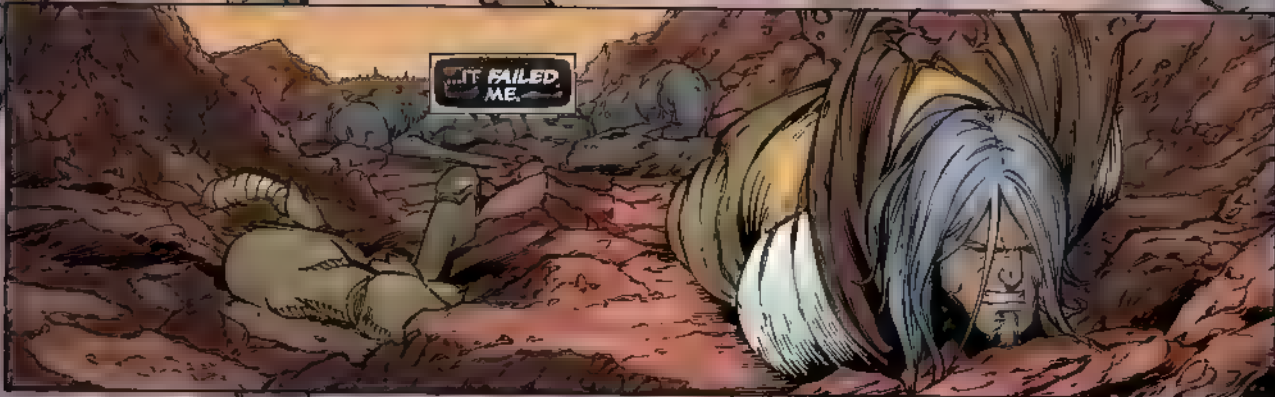
THERE WAS
NO WARNING TO THE
MAGIC'S GREAT FALL.

NO SIGNS THAT
THE WORLD WOULD BECOME
SO BARREN SO FAST.



WE BUILT OUR
LIVES AND OUR
CIVILIZATIONS
AROUND THIS
SO-CALLED
POWER. WE
PUT OUR TRUST
IN IT... OUR
FAITH.

AND WHEN I
NEEDED IT
MOST...



...IT FAILED
ME.



BACK THEN, I COULDN'T
STOP THE MOB FROM
MUTILATING MY BODY,
BUT I FOUND A WAY TO
PERSEVERE.

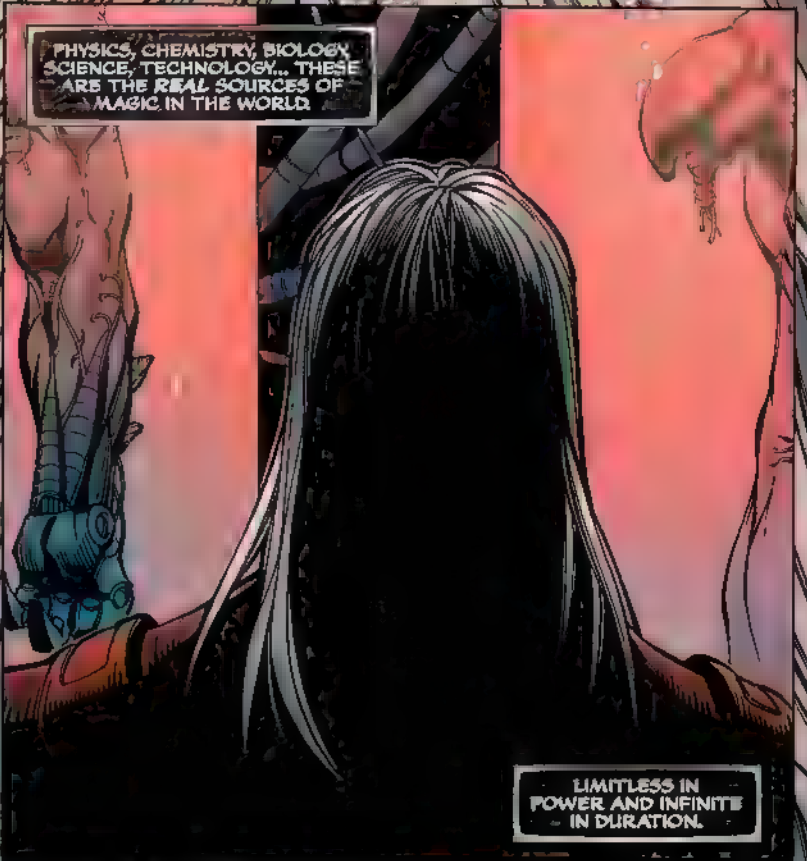
I COULDN'T WALK AFTER
THE LIGHT OF MAGIC DIED,
BUT I FOUND A WAY
TO ENDURE.



AND HERE AGAIN, I STAND
ON MY OWN TWO LEGS,
SO TO SPEAK, READY AS
ALWAYS TO SURVIVE.



YES, LIKE MANY, I PUT MY FAITH
IN MAGIC, BUT EVENTUALLY I
DISCOVERED A MORE RELIABLE
SOURCE OF POWER.



PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY,
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY... THESE
ARE THE REAL SOURCES OF
MAGIC IN THE WORLD.

LIMITLESS IN
POWER AND INFINITE
IN DURATION.



AS WILL MY
REIGN BE.



ASPEN

Vol. 2

#2

OF 9

COVER A

SOULFIRE



φ
CRAWFORD
Sotelo

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#2
OF 9
COVER B

SANCTUAL JOURNAL SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE TWO OF NINE

Story: J. T. Krul

Pencils: Marcus To - Inks: Saleem Crawford - Colors: Beth Sotelo

Letters: Josh Reed

Soulfire Created by: Michael Turner

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ | Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STRIGERWALD | Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

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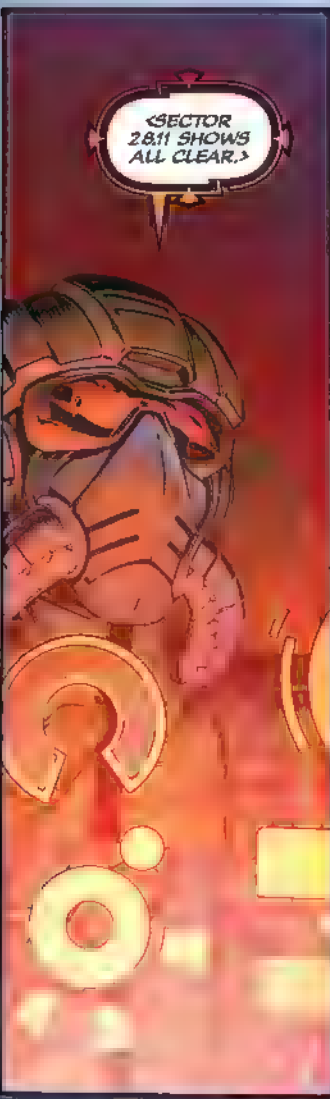
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NO ELECTRONIC
DETECTION, BUT THERMAL
SENSORS ARE PICKING UP
A LARGE MASS THREE
MILES FROM CURRENT
POSITION

ALL REPORTS OF
THE ATTACKS ON SAN
FRANCISCO AND TOKYO
INDICATED THE CREATURE
WAS DEFINITELY MAN-MADE.
MUST HAVE A CLOAKING
MECHANISM

STAY ON
CURRENT HEADING.
SOMETHING IS
UP AHEAD

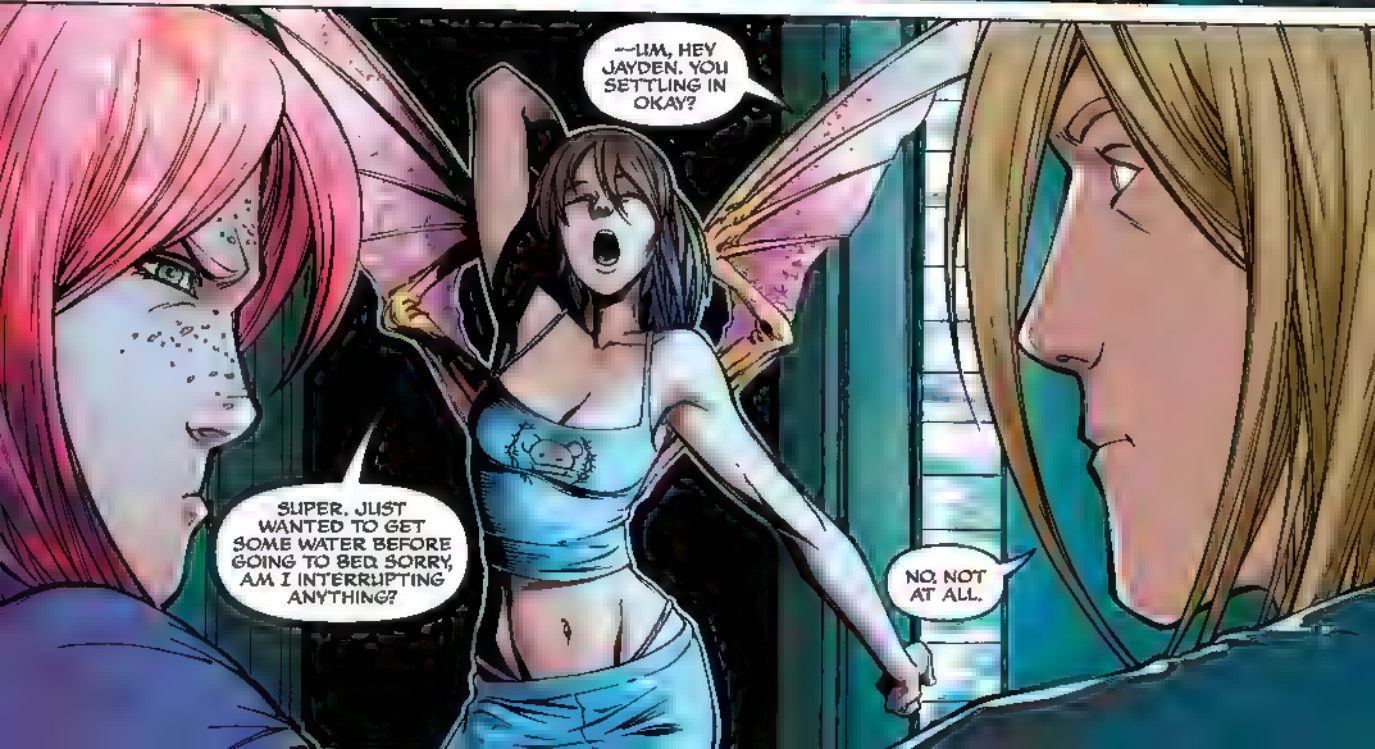
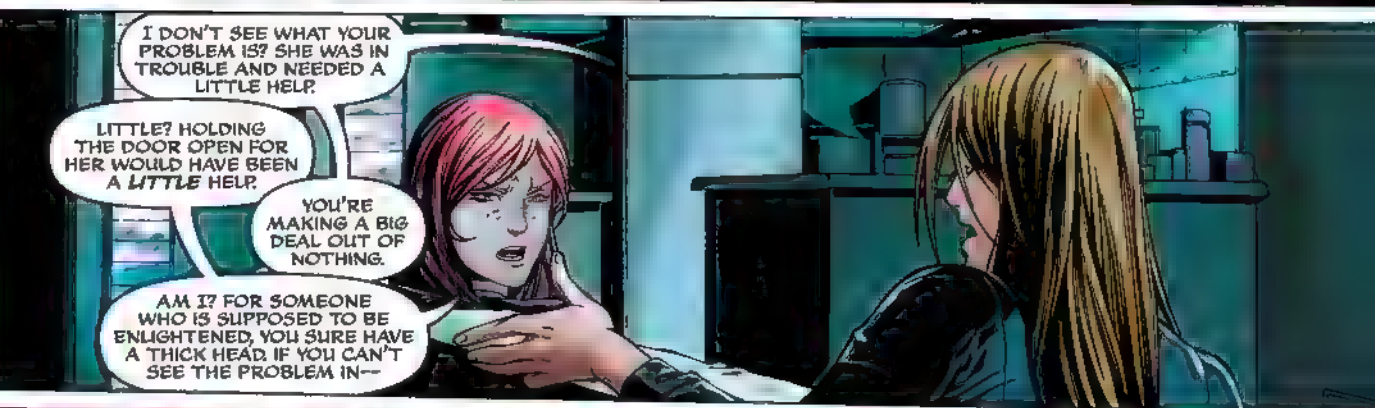
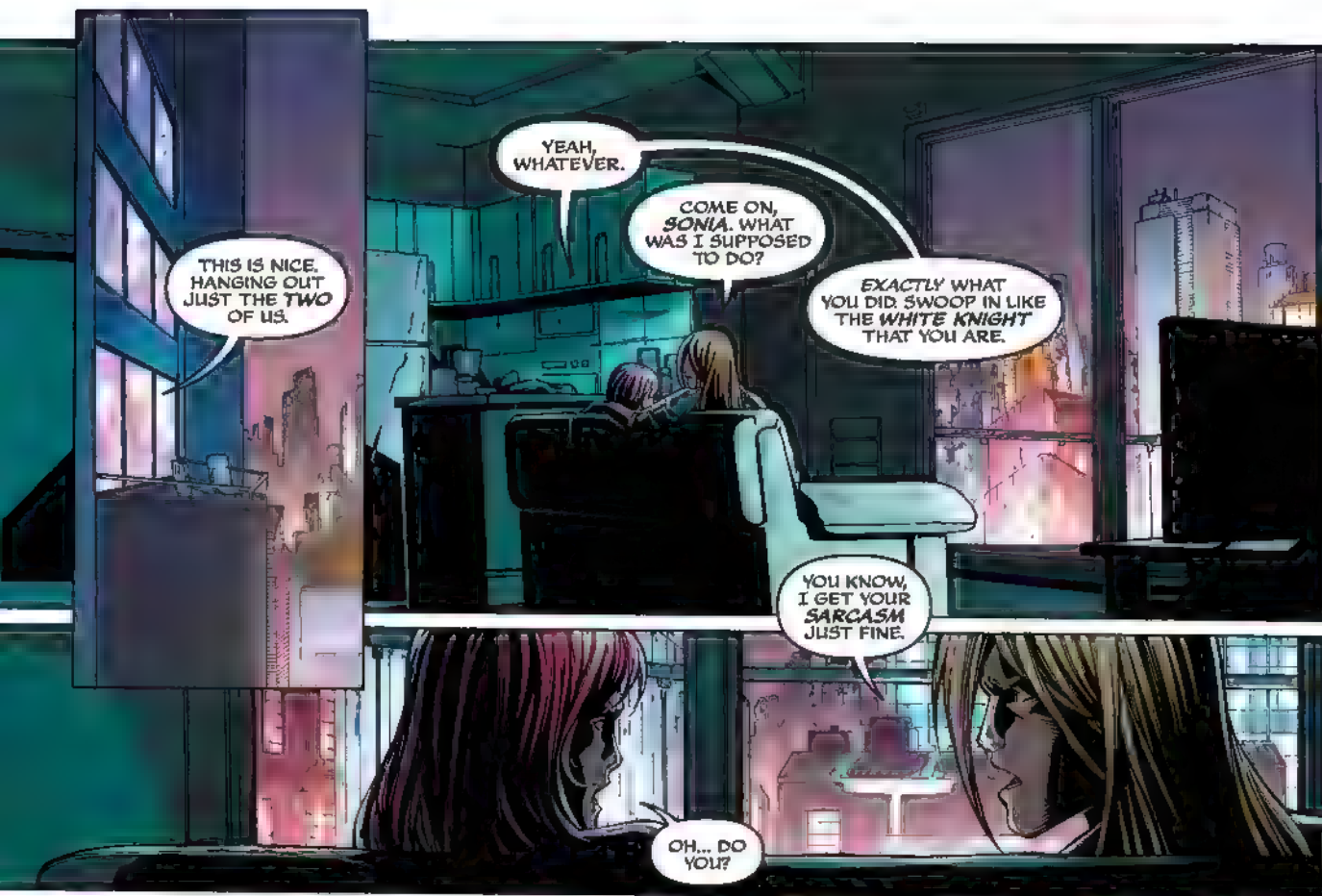


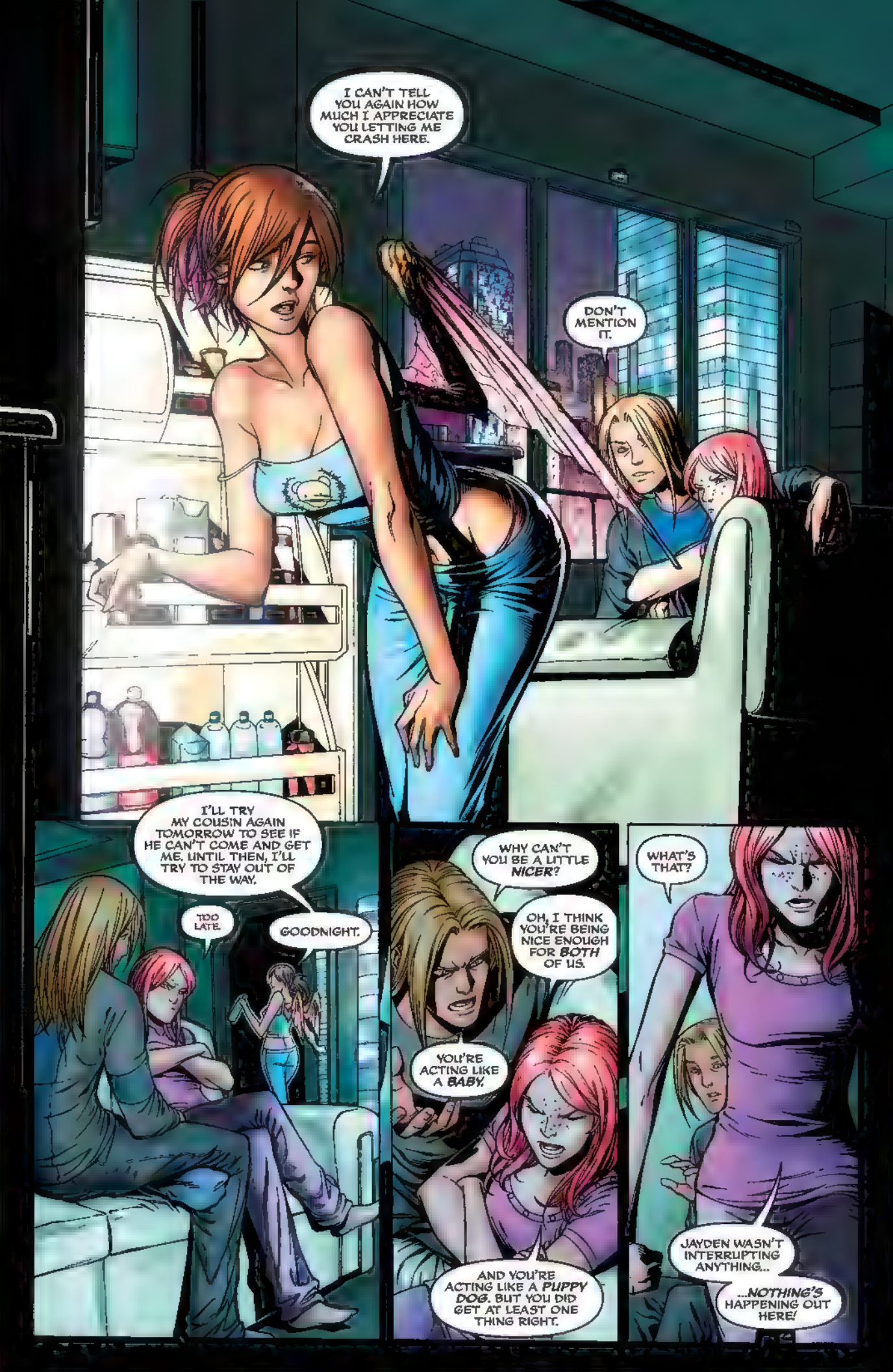
COMMAND...
I SEE IT



MOVE TO
INTERCEPT







I CAN'T TELL
YOU AGAIN HOW
MUCH I APPRECIATE
YOU LETTING ME
CRASH HERE.

DON'T
MENTION
IT.

I'LL TRY
MY COUSIN AGAIN
TOMORROW TO SEE IF
HE CAN'T COME AND GET
ME. UNTIL THEN, I'LL
TRY TO STAY OUT OF
THE WAY.

TOO
LATE.

GOODNIGHT.

WHY CAN'T
YOU BE A LITTLE
NICER?

OH, I THINK
YOU'RE BEING
NICE ENOUGH
FOR BOTH
OF US.

YOU'RE
ACTING LIKE
A BABY.

AND YOU'RE
ACTING LIKE A PUPPY
DOG. BUT YOU DID
GET AT LEAST ONE
THING RIGHT.

WHAT'S
THAT?

JAYDEN WASN'T
INTERRUPTING
ANYTHING...

...NOTHING'S
HAPPENING OUT
HERE!

EIGHTH CONTINENT



WE COULD HAVE TAKEN THOSE LOSERS. I THINK WE SHOULD GO BACK.

SERIOUSLY, BENOIST. THEY JUST CAUGHT US OFF GUARD.

DROP IT, BOTH OF YOU.



I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GET ABSORBED INTO A PROJECT. IF GABRIEL DOESN'T WANT DISTRACTIONS, THEN THAT'S THAT.

WHY DON'T YOU TWO PREP THE SHIP FOR TAKEOFF.



HEY!

WHAT'S UP, PAPA BEAR???

SORRY BOYS, BUT I GOTTA SEE GABRIEL FACE-TO-FACE. YOU'LL BE SAFER HERE.



WE CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES.

YEAH, YOU KNOW YOU CAN TRUST US.

I KNOW I CAN. BUT IT'S JAKOBI AND HIS BRAT PACK THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT.



BESIDES, I'M NOT PLANNING ON GOING UP AGAINST THEM. AS YOU SEE, I CAN BE PRETTY SNEAKY WHEN I WANT TO BE.



INVENTORS BEING OBSESSED WITH THEIR PROJECT IS NOTHING NEW TO ME. I'VE BEEN PLAGUED BY SUCH DESIRES IN MY OWN PAST. BUT GABRIEL WAS NEVER THE TYPE. HE WAS SMARTER THAN THAT.

IT'S BECAUSE OF HIM THAT I'M EVEN ALIVE TODAY.

I SHOULD HAVE DIED THAT NIGHT... THANKS TO RAINIER. THROWN TO THE GROUND, TORN TO PIECES. AND I WOULD HAVE, IF GABRIEL HADN'T FOUND ME.

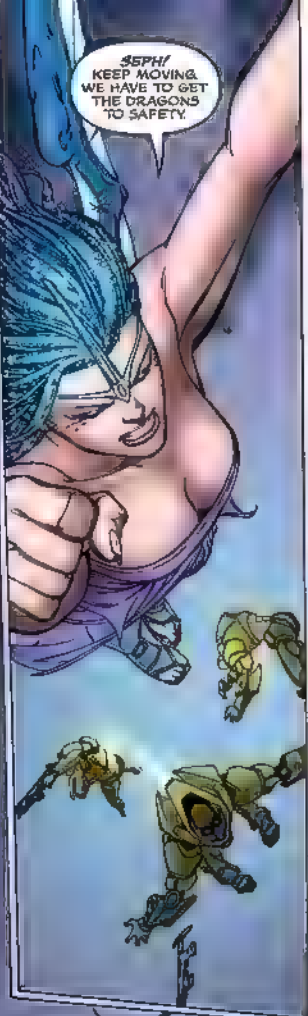
HE HELPED ME REPAIR NOT ONLY MY BODY, BUT MY MIND AS WELL.

GABRIEL SHOWED ME THAT LOSING MY LIMBS DIDN'T MEAN THAT I LOST MY SOUL.

SOMETHING ABOUT JAKOBI'S STORY SEEMS OFF TO ME.

I NEED TO MAKE SURE GABRIEL IS OKAY.

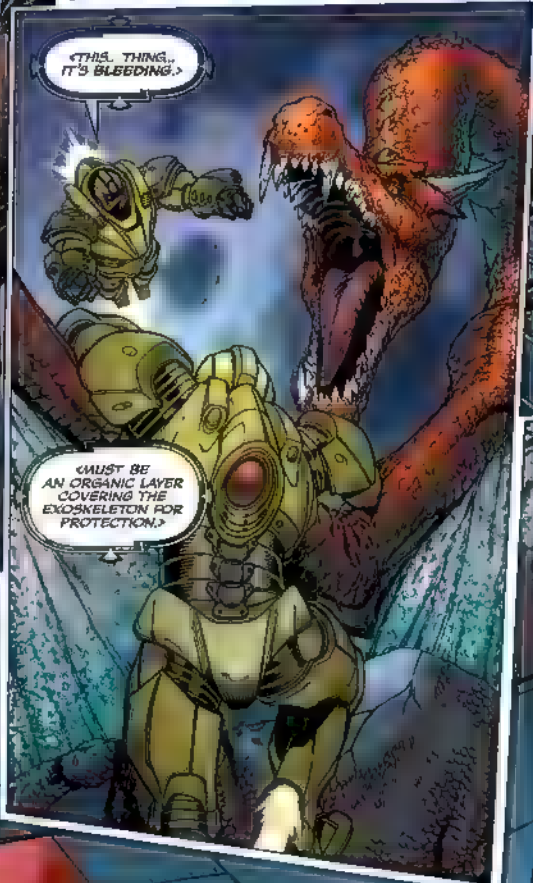
I OWE HIM THAT MUCH.



SEPH!
KEEP MOVING.
WE HAVE TO GET
THE DRAGONS
TO SAFETY.



I KNOW,
GRACE I'M
DOING THE
BEST I CAN.



«THIS THING...
IT'S BLEEDING.»

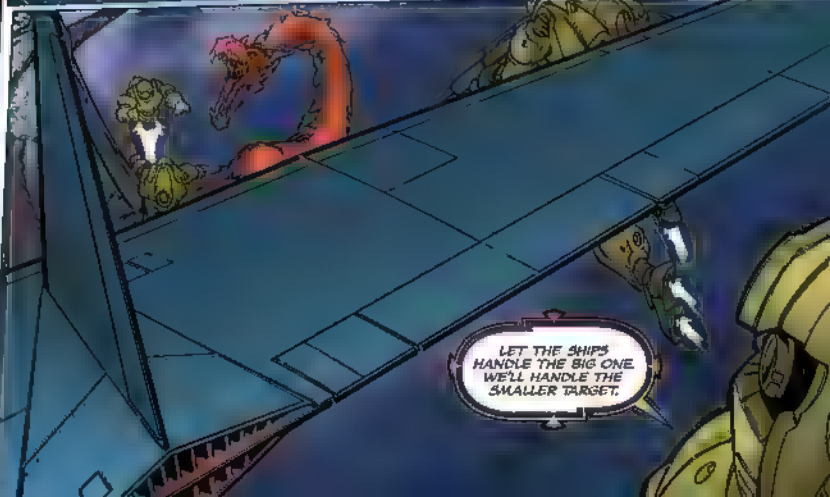
«MUST BE
AN ORGANIC LAYER
COVERING THE
EXOSKELETON FOR
PROTECTION.»



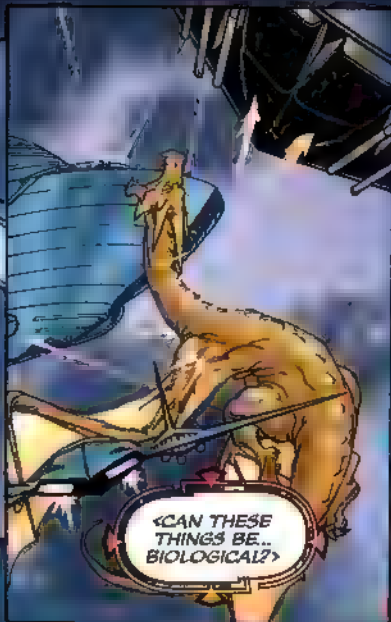
INCOMING!

WRR44!!

TAKE EVASIVE
ACTION.



LET THE SHIPS
HANDLE THE BIG ONE.
WE'LL HANDLE THE
SMALLER TARGET.



«CAN THESE THINGS BE... BIOLOGICAL?»

«STAY FOCUSED
WHATEVER THEY ARE
IS IRRELEVANT. WE'VE
GOT OUR ORDERS.»

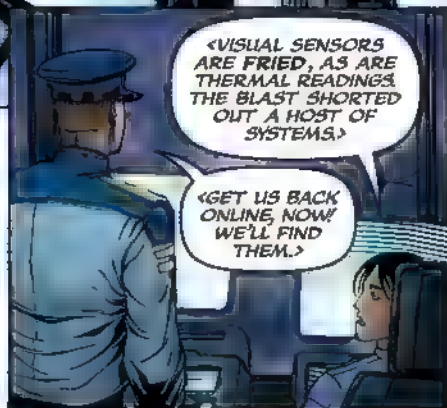
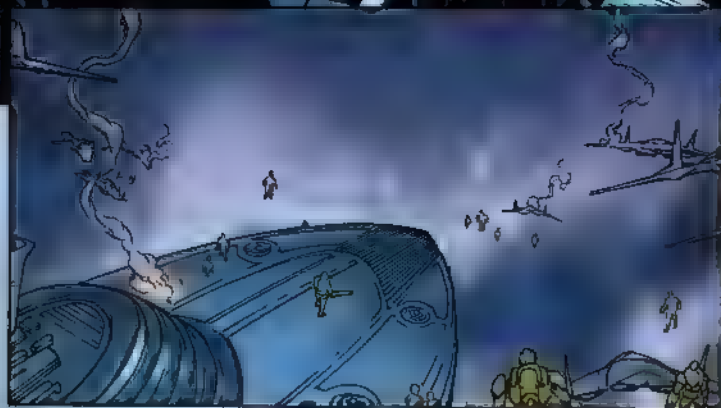
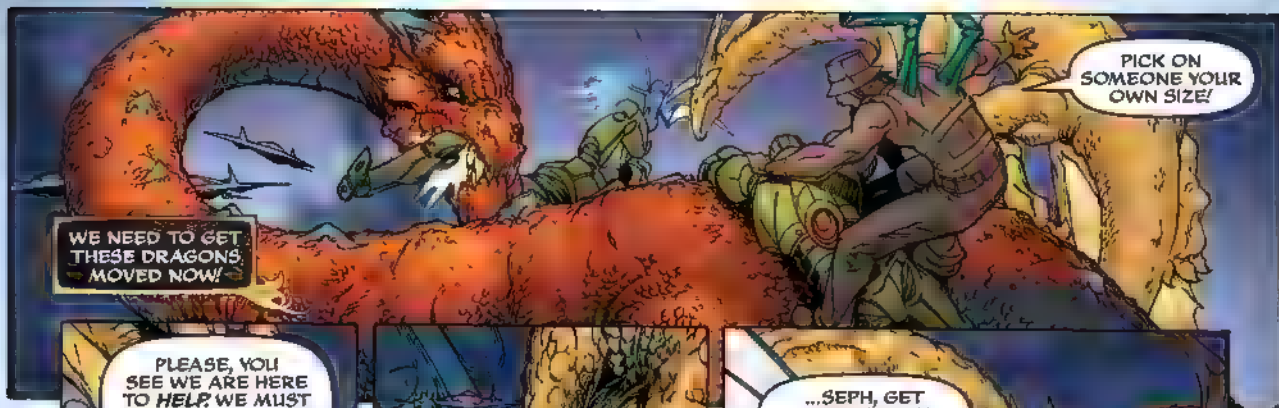
«ATTENTION!
YOU ARE VIOLATING
CHINESE AIR SPACE
AND INTERFERING WITH
A MILITARY OPERATION.
SURRENDER
IMMEDIATELY!»

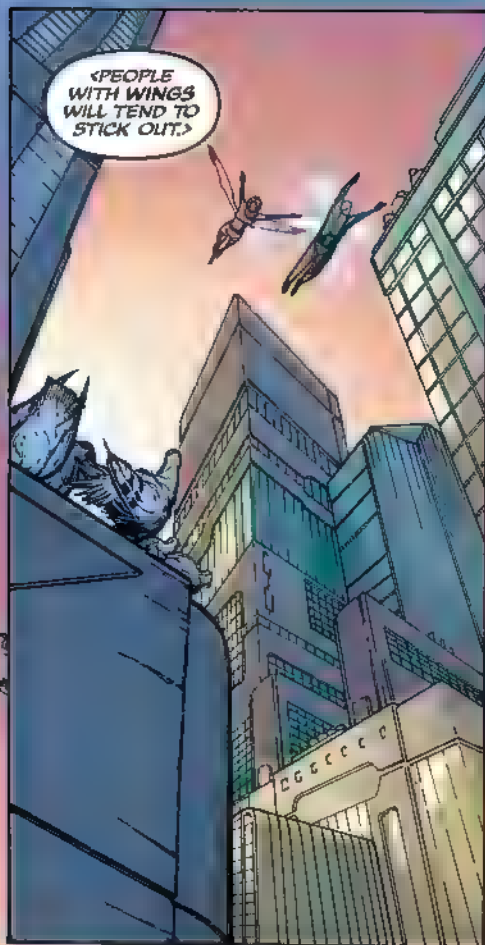
YOU ARE THE
VIOLATORS— OF
EVERYTHING THAT IS
WONDERFUL IN THIS
WORLD.

HIS FIGHT IS POINTLESS.
IT IS SOMETHING WE
CANNOT WIN.

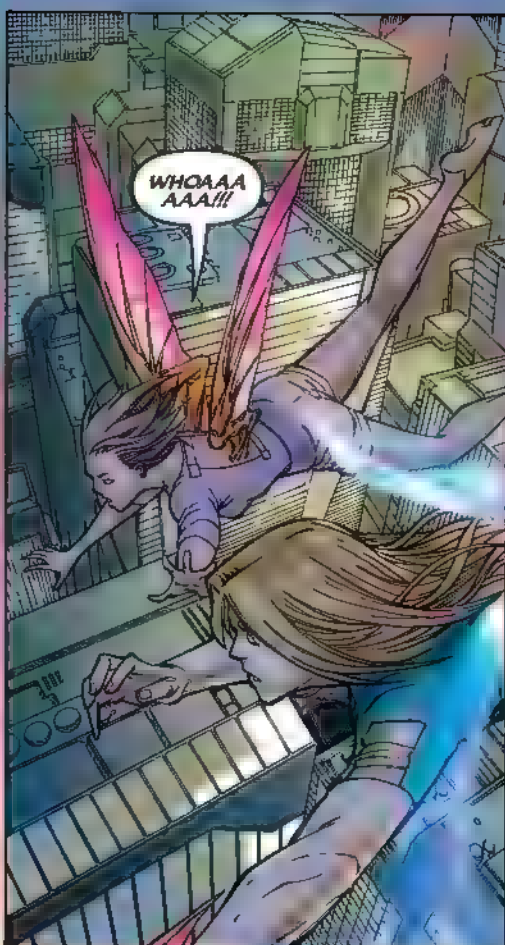


EVENTUALLY, THEIR
NUMBERS WILL
OVERPOWER US.

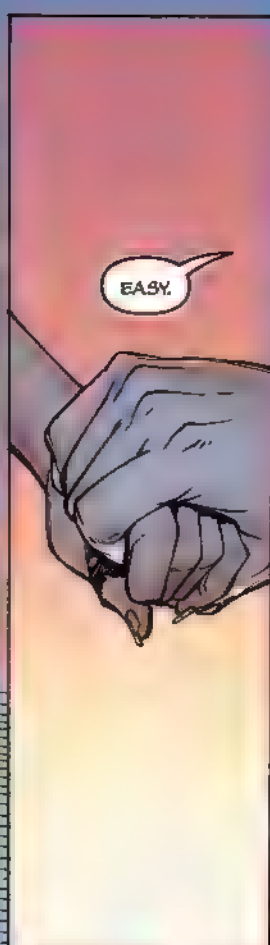




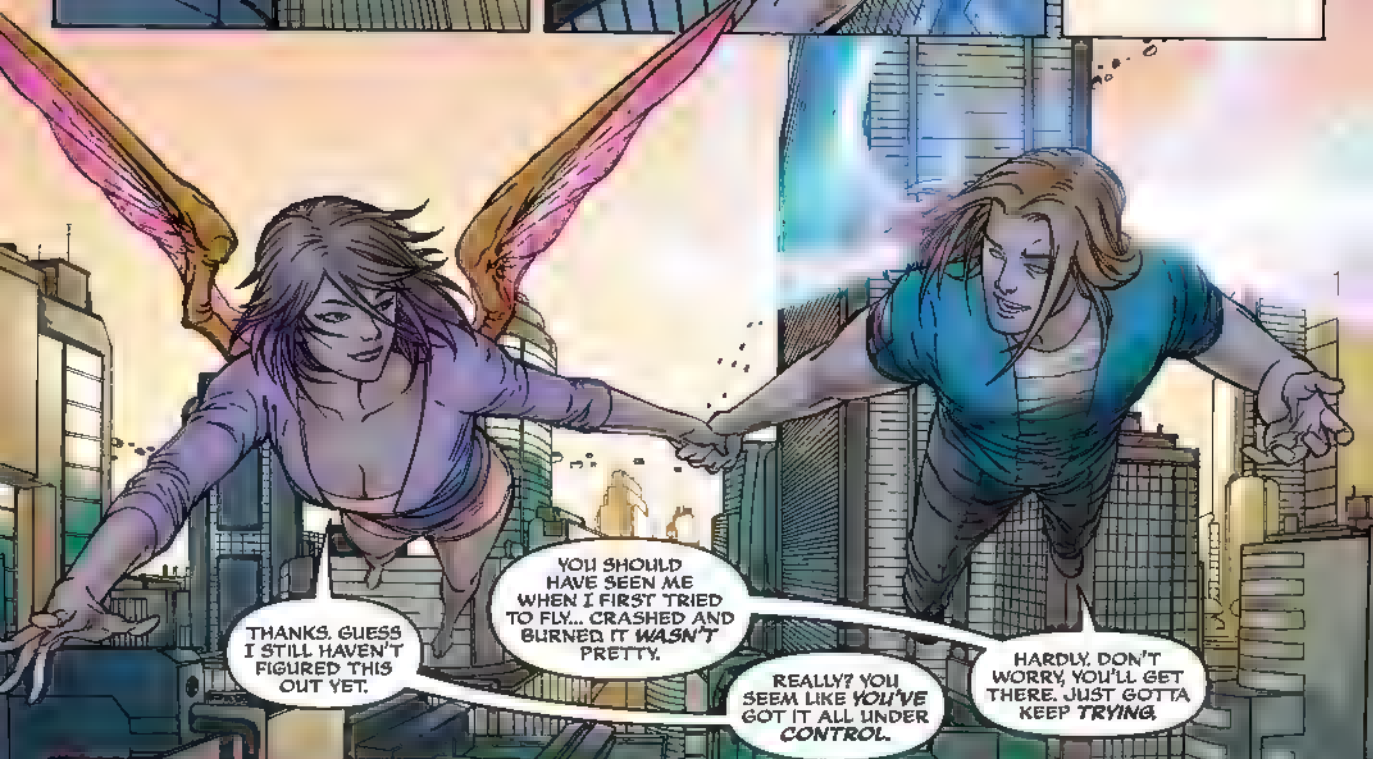
«PEOPLE WITH WINGS WILL TEND TO STICK OUT.»



WHOOAAA
AAA!!!



EASY.



THANKS, GUESS I STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED THIS OUT YET.

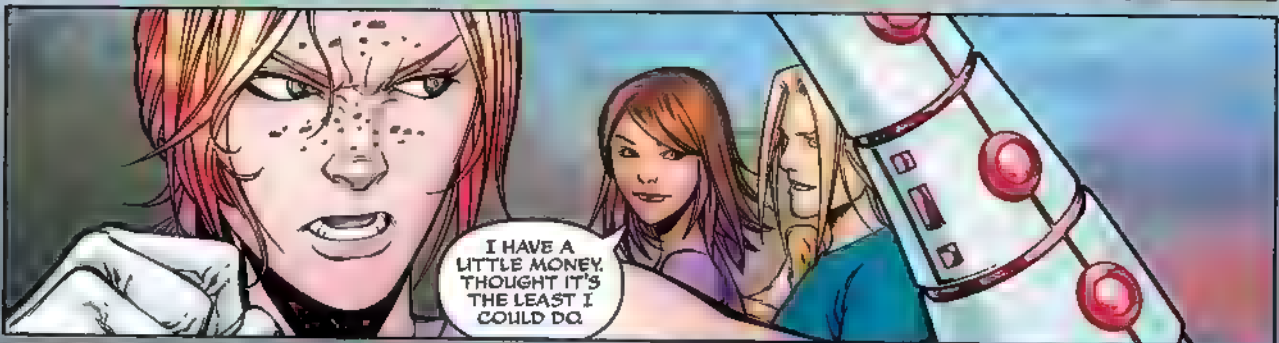
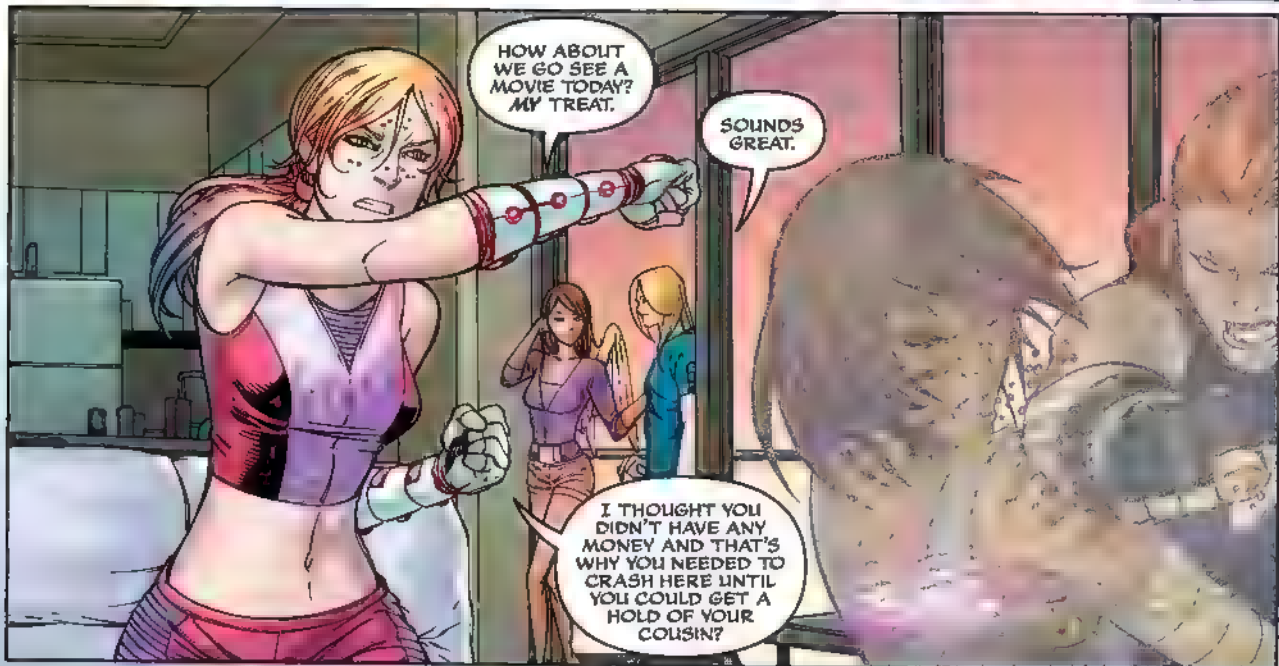
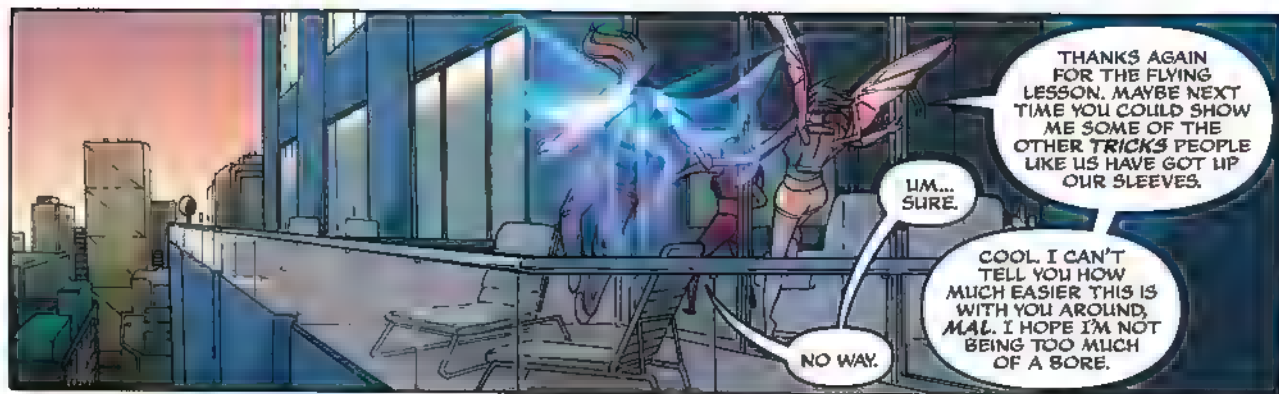
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME WHEN I FIRST TRIED TO FLY... CRASHED AND BURNED IT WASN'T PRETTY.

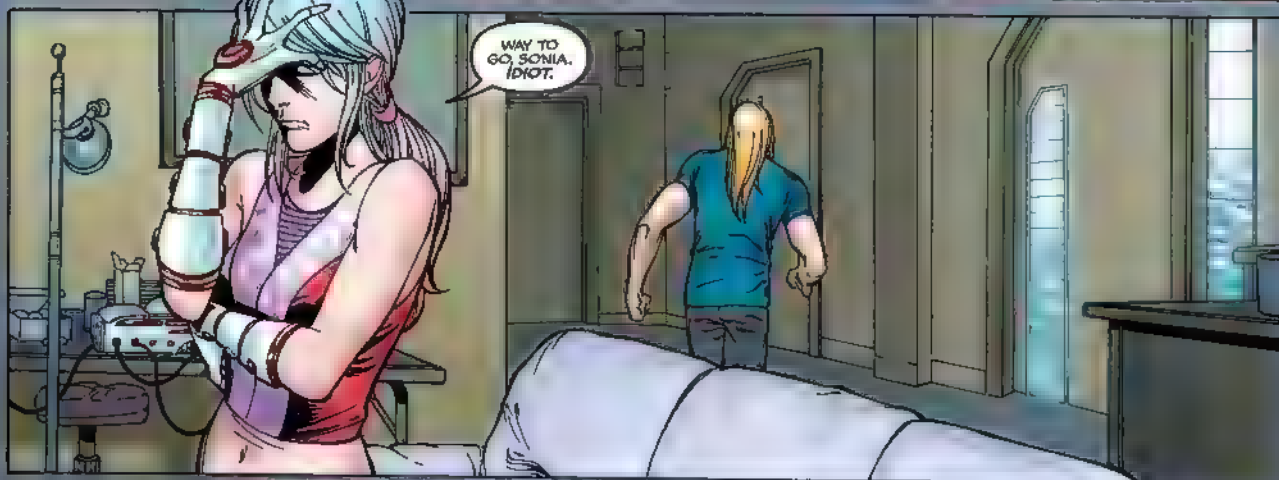
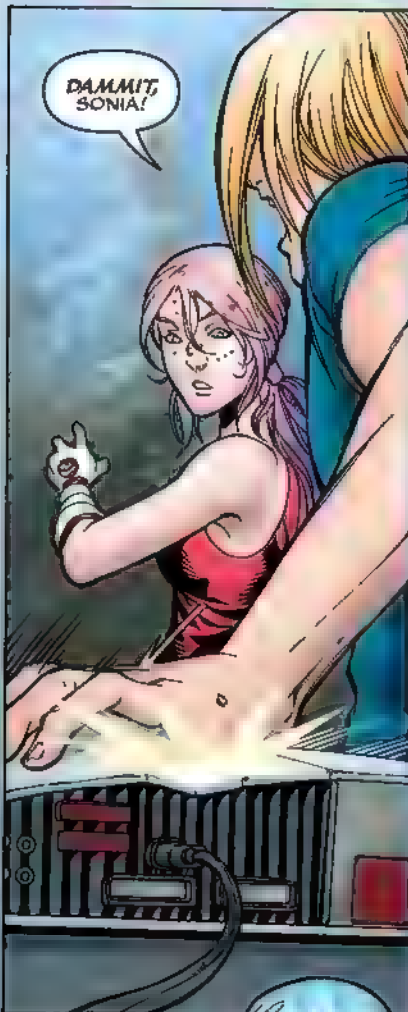
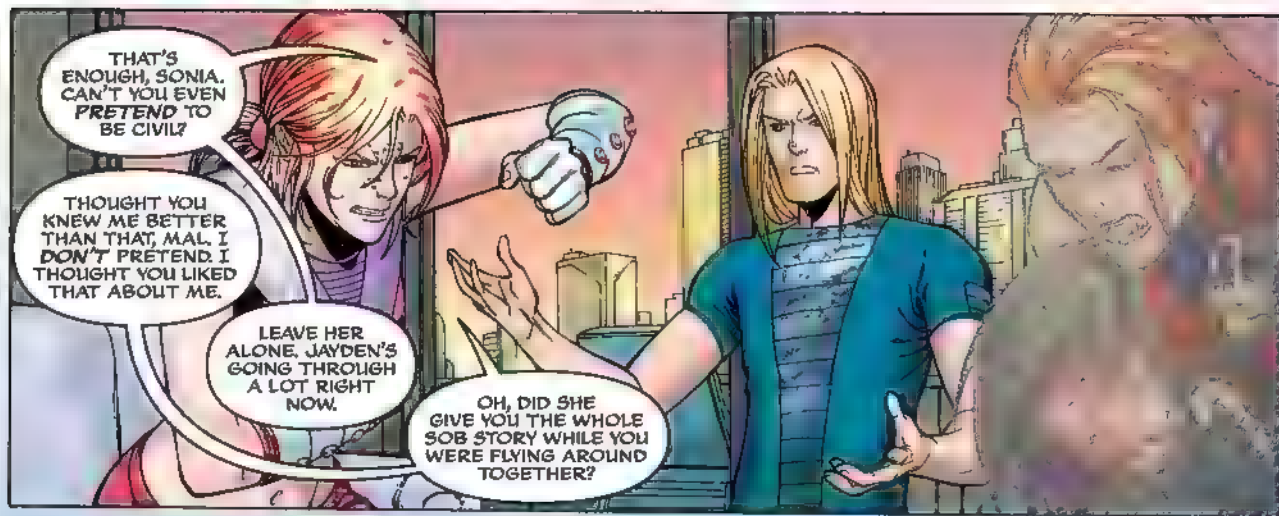
REALLY? YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'VE GOT IT ALL UNDER CONTROL.

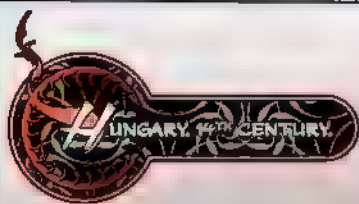
HARDLY, DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL GET THERE, JUST GOTTA KEEP TRYING.



IF YOU SAY SO.





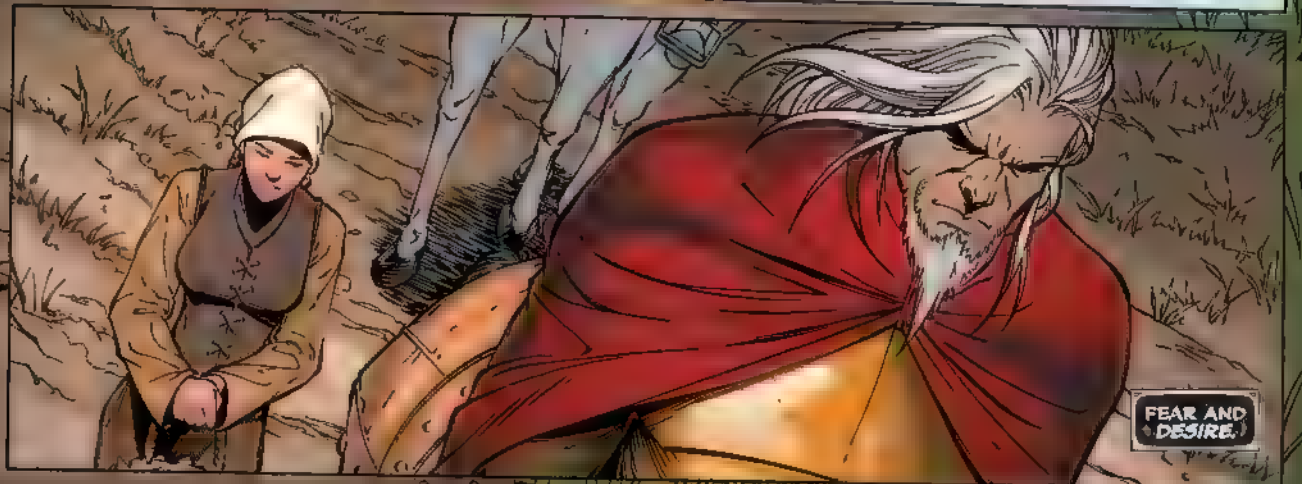
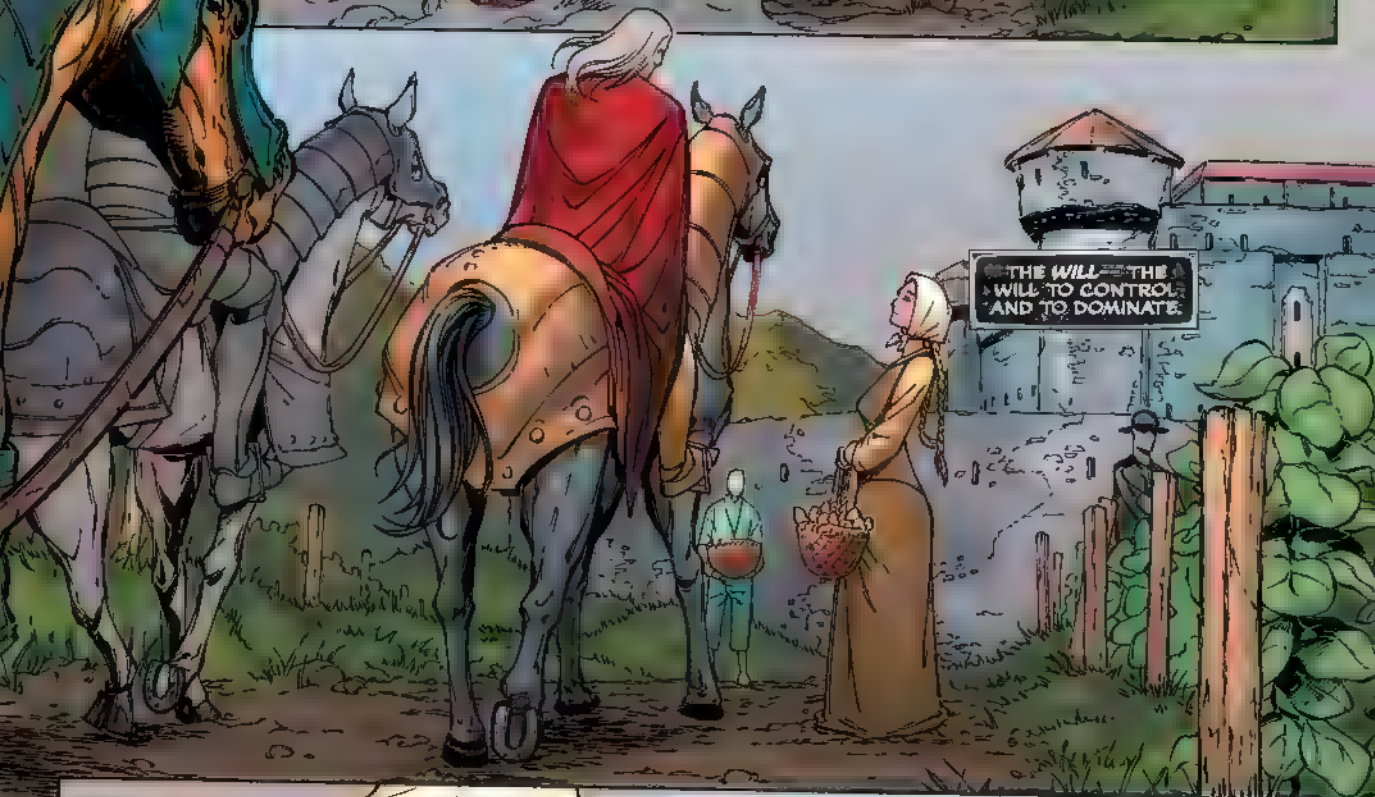


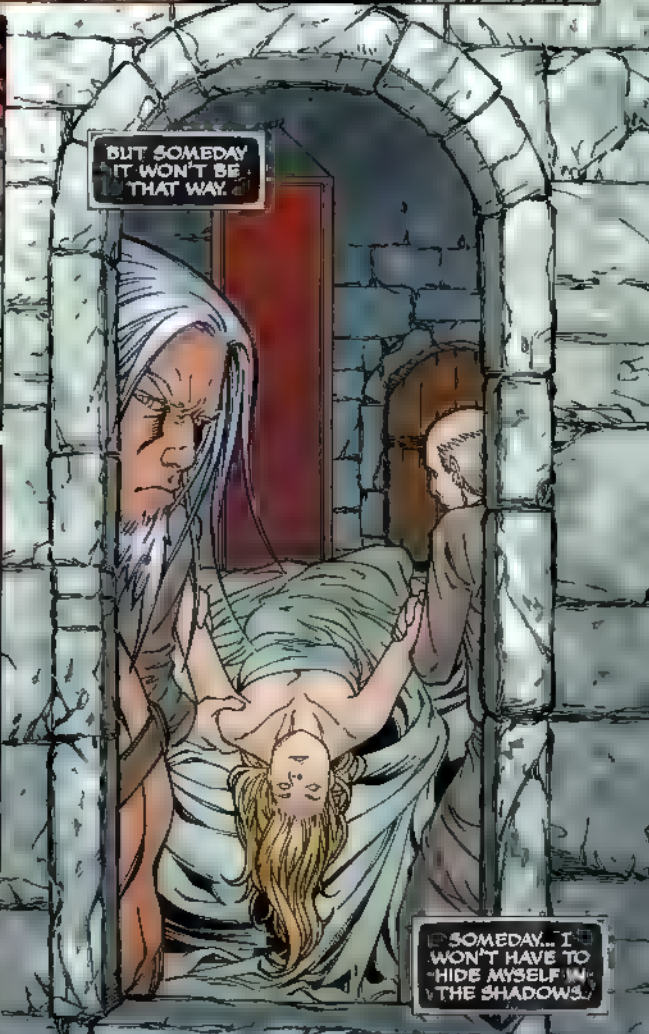
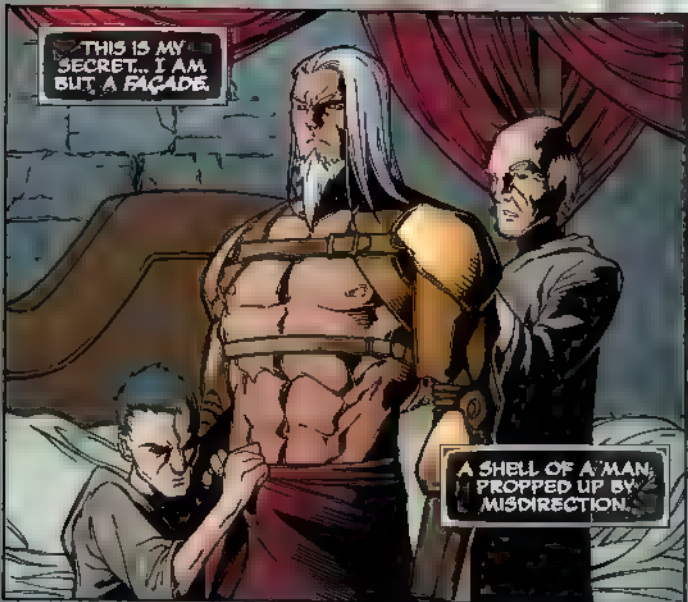
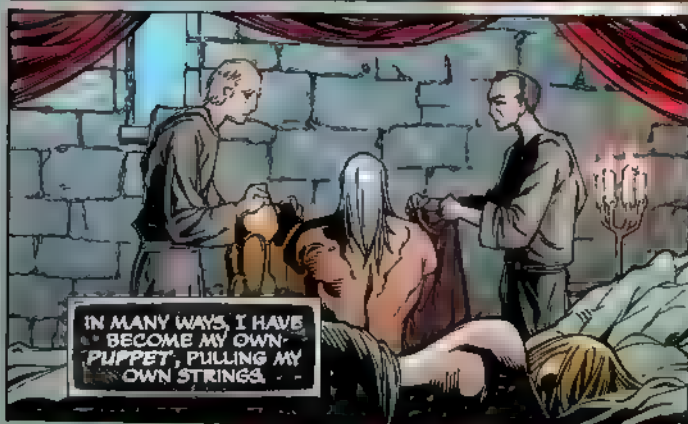
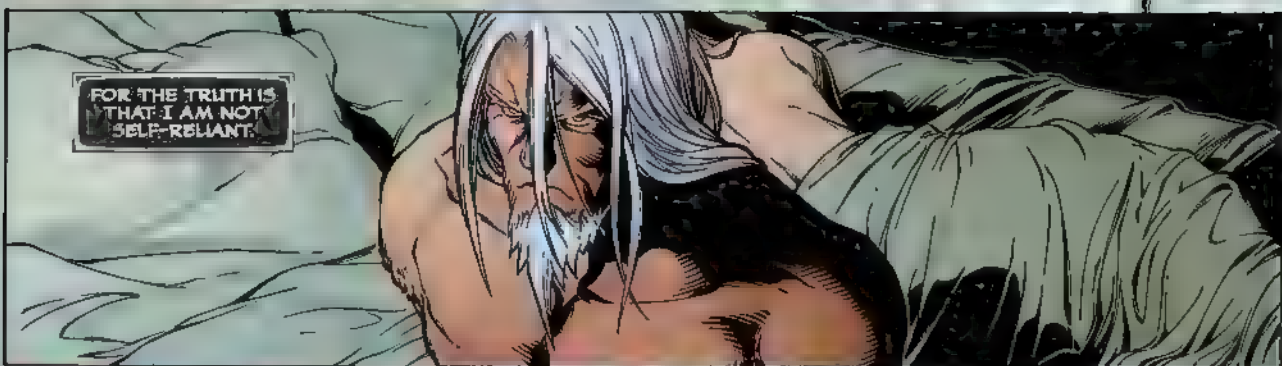
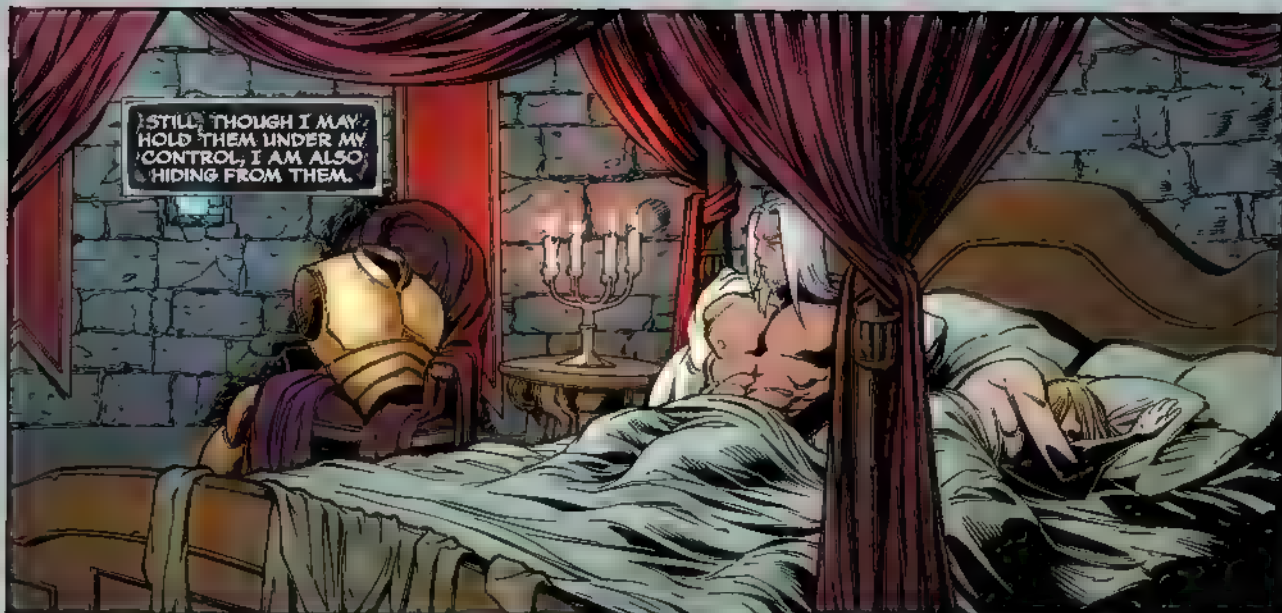
I OWE NOTHING IN MY LIFE TO A HIGHER FORCE. NO MAGICAL ENERGY DESTINED ME FOR SUCH A ROLE IN THE WORLD.

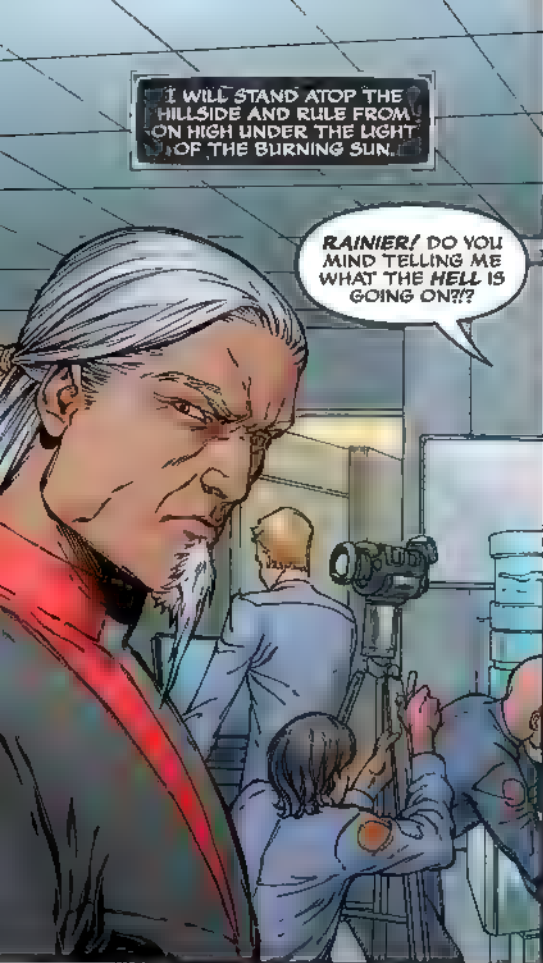
I DID THIS MYSELF. CLAWING AND SCRATCHING MY WAY THROUGH THE AGES.

I SUCCEEDED BECAUSE I KNOW THE SECRET.

POWER IS NOT ABOUT PHYSICAL STRENGTH.







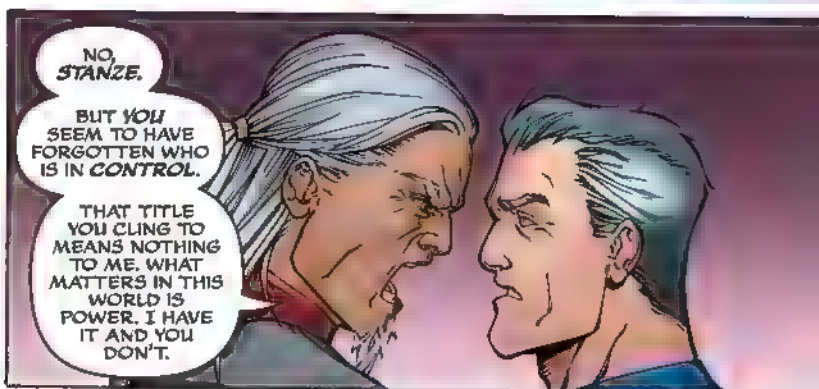
I WILL STAND ATOP THE HILLSIDE AND RULE FROM ON HIGH UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE BURNING SUN.

RAINIER! DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON???



YOU'VE GOT YOUR GARRISONS POSITIONED ALONG THE ENTIRE COASTLINE AND YOUR SPECIAL FORCES UNITS ARE BEGINNING TO INTERFERE WITH YOUR OWN POLICE FORCE.

YOU CAN'T JUST DO ANYTHING YOU WANT. OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT I AM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NORTHWEST CONFERENCE, NOT YOU?



NO, STANZE.

BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN WHO IS IN CONTROL.

THAT TITLE YOU CLING TO MEANS NOTHING TO ME. WHAT MATTERS IN THIS WORLD IS POWER. I HAVE IT AND YOU DON'T.



UM, OBVIOUSLY, YOU COMMAND AN ARMY THROUGHOUT OUR CITY STREETS, AND YOU ARE THE REASON WE ARE KEPT SAFE. YOU DESERVE ALL THE CREDIT. I JUST MEAN--

I'M GLAD YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD BUT DON'T TELL ME...

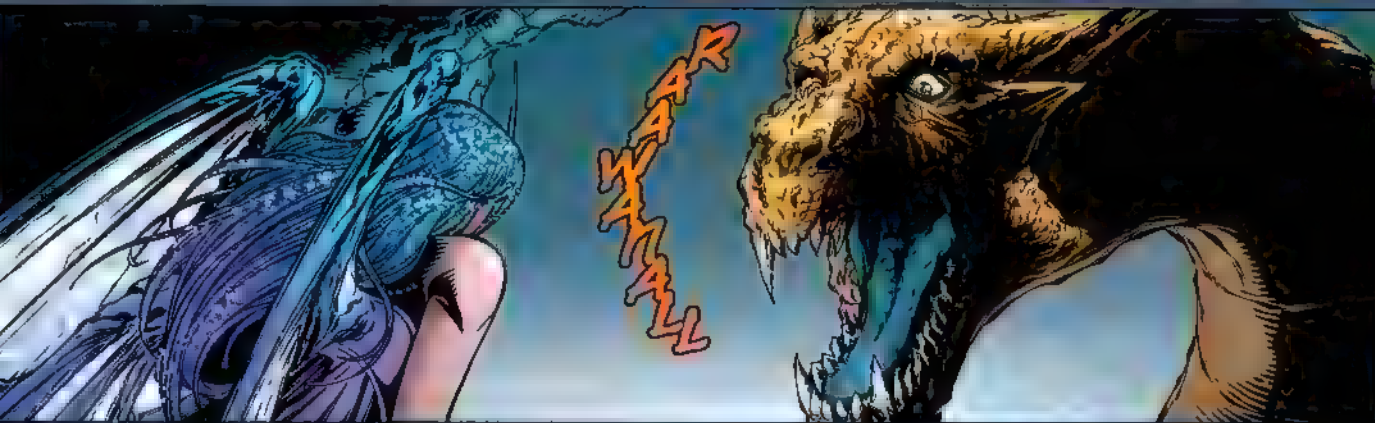


...TELL THE PEOPLE.



NOT GREAT, BUT
IT SHOULD DO UNTIL
NIGHTFALL. THEN WE
CAN MAKE OUR WAY
BACK TO THE
EVERLANDS.

YOU'LL BOTH
BE SAFE HERE,
MARIGOLD.



REALLY?

SHE SAYS THAT
THERE IS ANOTHER—
HER YOUNGEST. SHE WAS
TAKEN JUST BEFORE
THE HATCHING
HOUR.

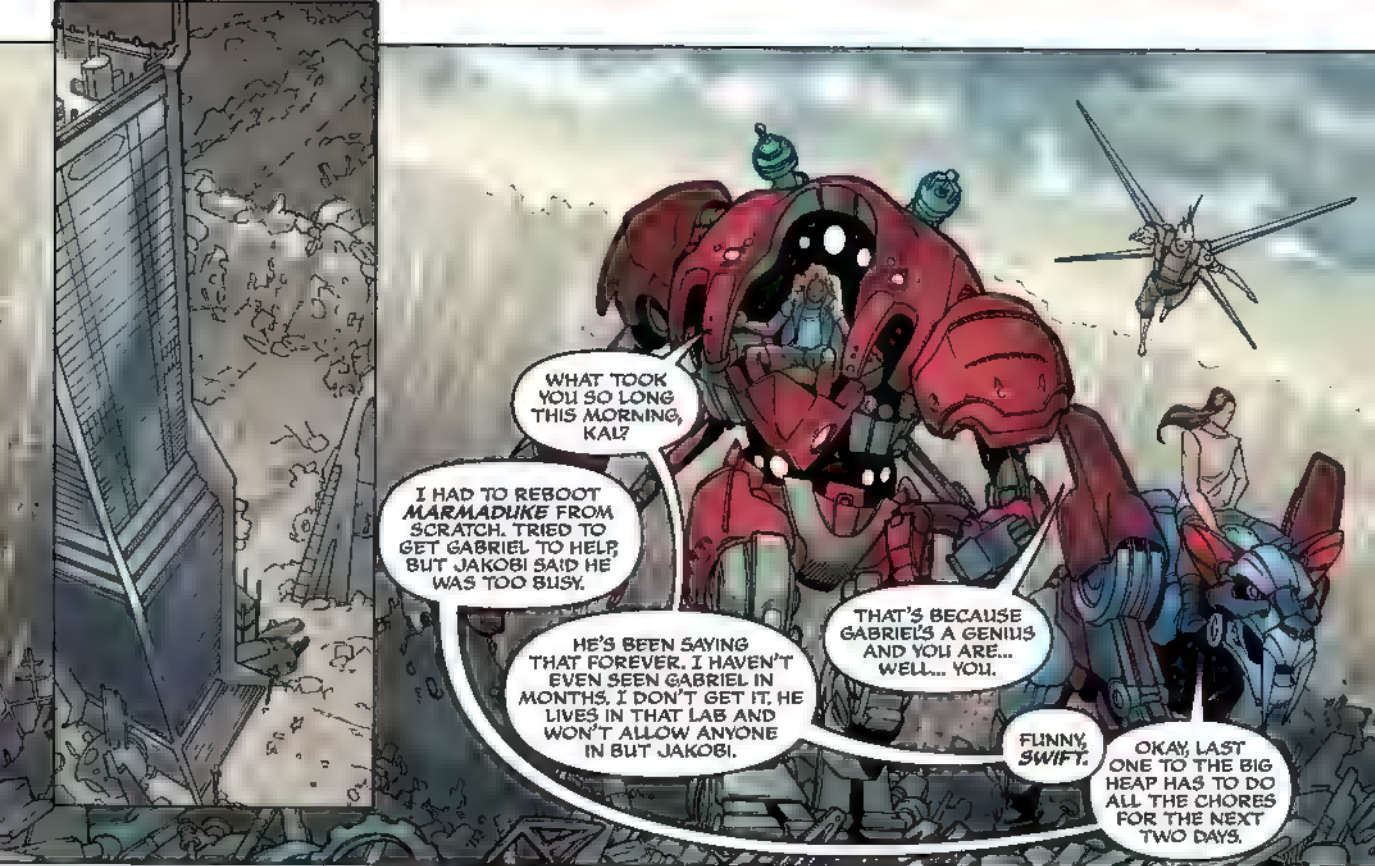
WHAT DID
SHE SAY?

TAKEN? TAKEN
WHERE?



TO THE
GREAT CITY.

BEIJING.



WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG THIS MORNING, KAL?

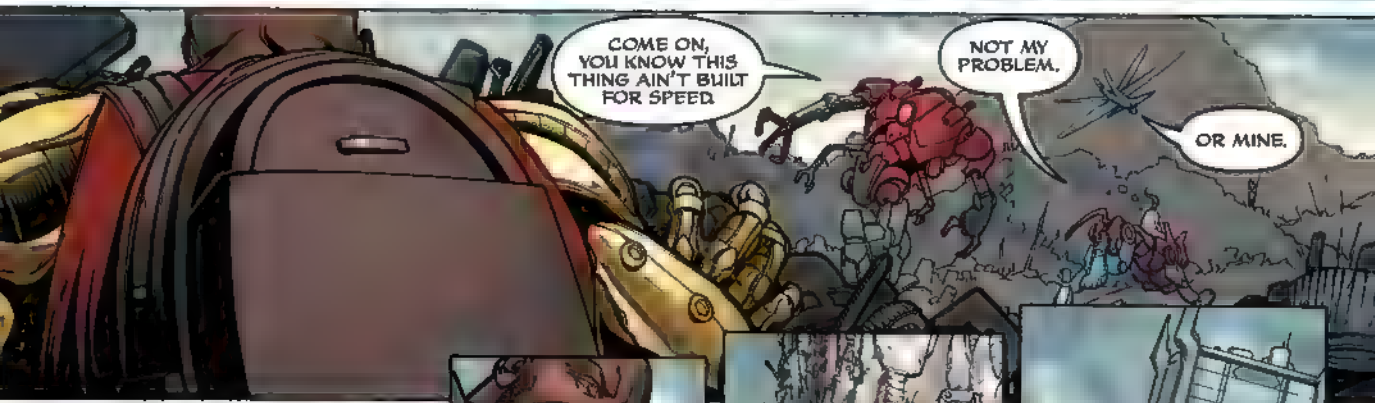
I HAD TO REBOOT MARMADUKE FROM SCRATCH. TRIED TO GET GABRIEL TO HELP, BUT JAKOBI SAID HE WAS TOO BUSY.

HE'S BEEN SAYING THAT FOREVER. I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN GABRIEL IN MONTHS. I DON'T GET IT. HE LIVES IN THAT LAB AND WON'T ALLOW ANYONE IN BUT JAKOBI.

THAT'S BECAUSE GABRIEL'S A GENIUS AND YOU ARE... WELL... YOU.

FUNNY, SWIFT.

OKAY, LAST ONE TO THE BIG HEAP HAS TO DO ALL THE CHORES FOR THE NEXT TWO DAYS.



COME ON, YOU KNOW THIS THING AIN'T BUILT FOR SPEED.

NOT MY PROBLEM.

OR MINE.



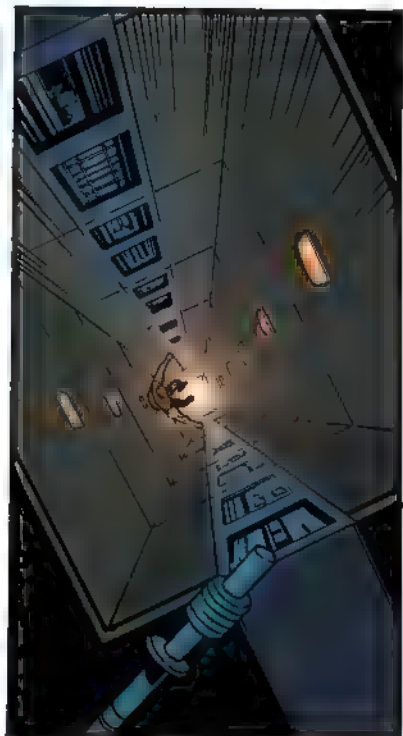
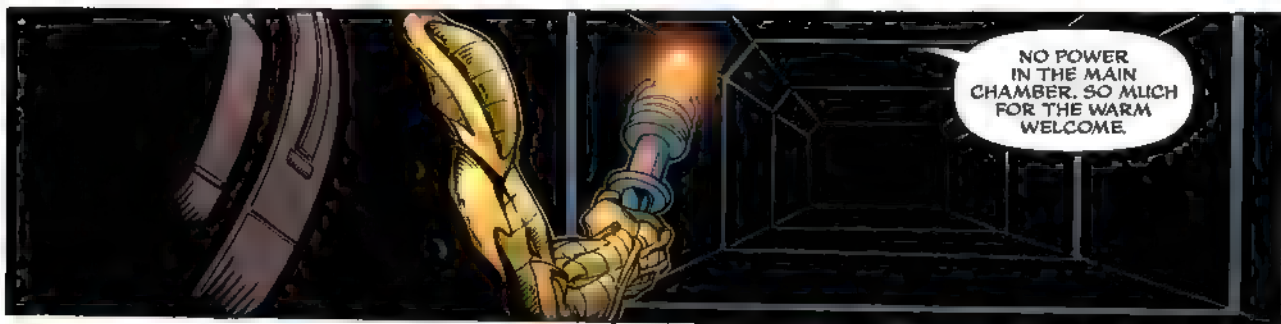
I'D SAY... JUST ABOUT FORTY-TWO FEET.



BEEP BEEP



PERFECT.





ASPEN
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#3
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JOHN MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE™



ASPEN
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#3
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MICHAEL JOHNER'S SOULFIRE™



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE THREE OF NINE

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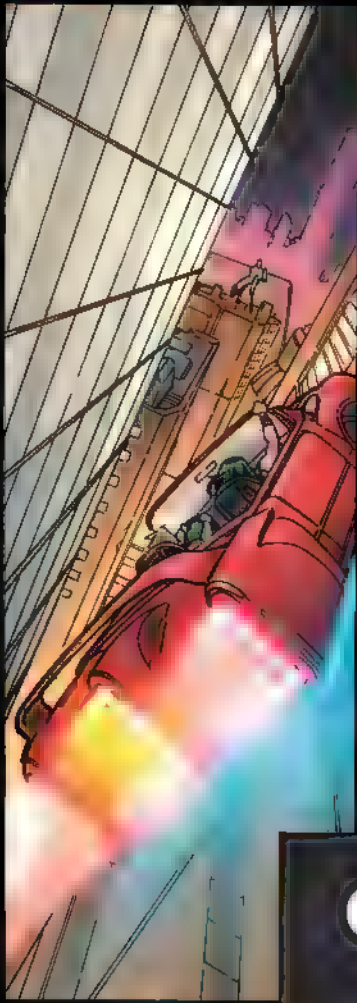
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THEY'RE STILL COMING. I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD'VE LAID LOW.

SHUT UP AND LET ME DRIVE! ONCE I OPEN HER UP THIS BABY WILL GET US SOME BREATHING ROOM.

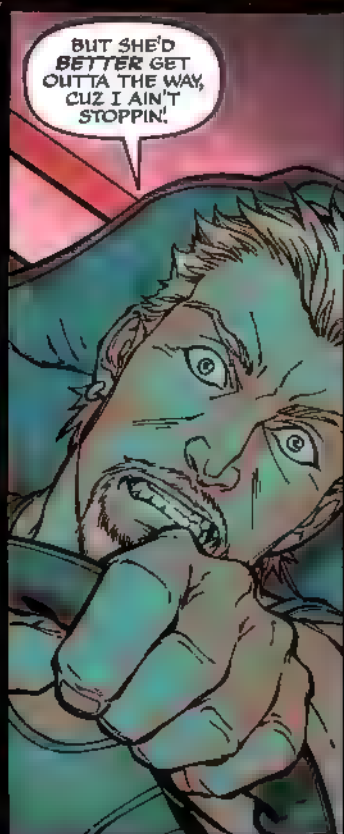
I ONLY STEAL THE VERY BEST.



WHO THE HELL IS THAT???

I DON'T KNOW.

BUT SHE'D BETTER GET OUTTA THE WAY, CUZ I AIN'T STOPPIN'.



SHOW'S OVER, FELLAS.







NOT THE
MOST EFFICIENT
EFFORT...

...BUT
EFFECTIVE,
NEVERTHELESS.

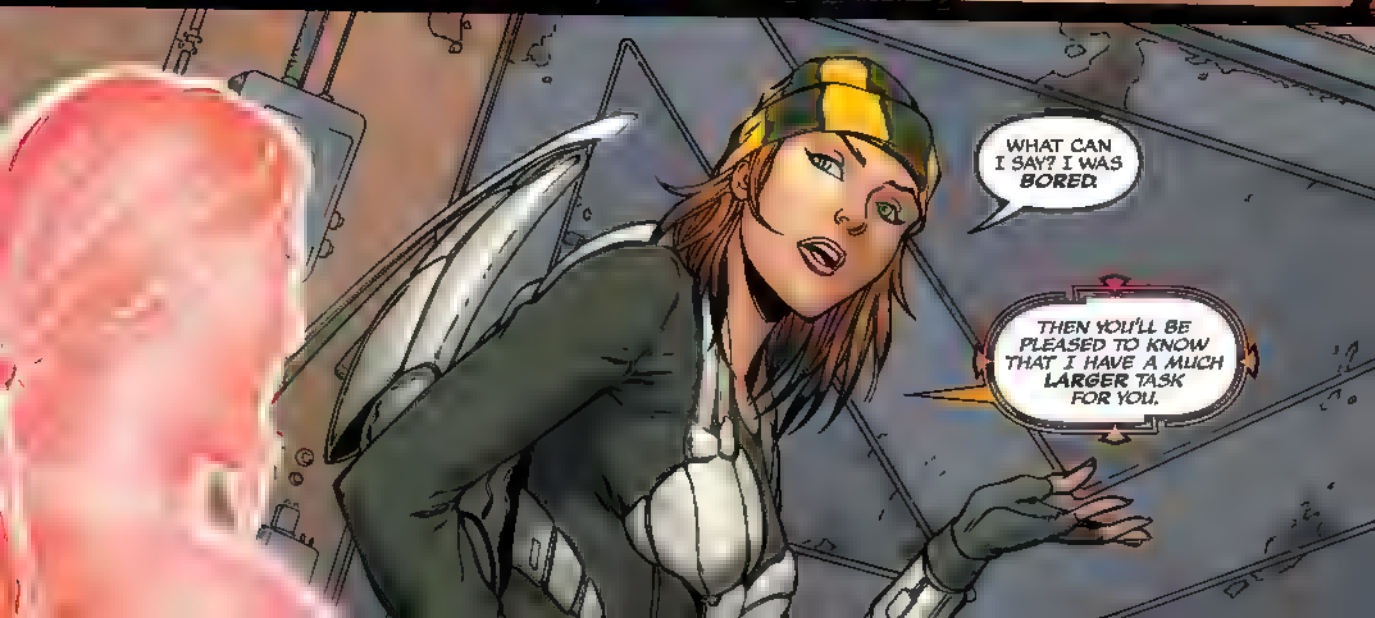
SUBTLETY
ISN'T ONE OF MY
STRONGEST TRAITS,
BUT THEN YOU KNEW
THAT BEFORE YOU
HIRED ME,
RAINIER.

YOU ARE
MISTAKEN IF YOU
THINK I AM UPSET
WITH YOU, BLACKJACK.
PROPERTY DAMAGE IS
THE LEAST OF MY
CONCERNS



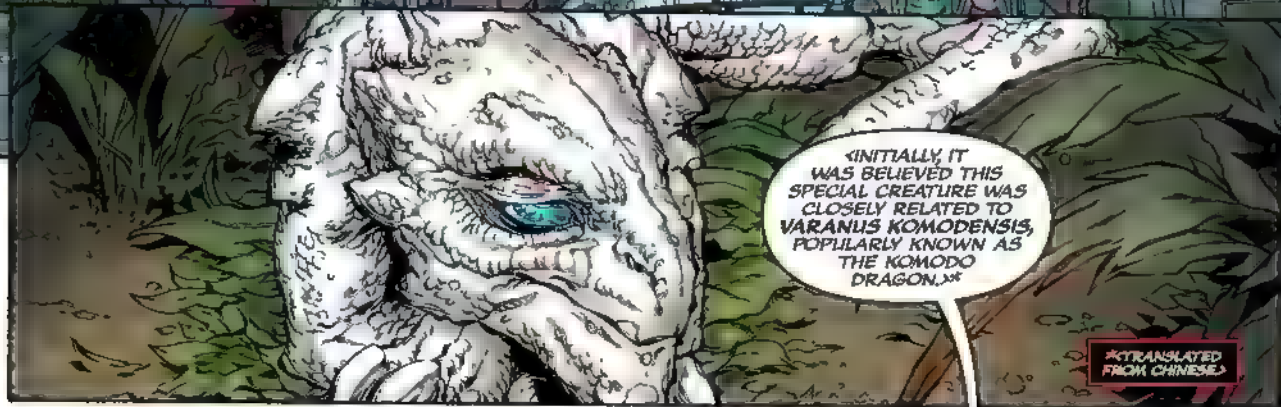
MAINTAINING
ORDER IN THE FACE
OF MAGIC'S RETURN
IS A DAUNTING TASK.
THERE IS MUCH THAT
NEEDS TO BE
DONE.

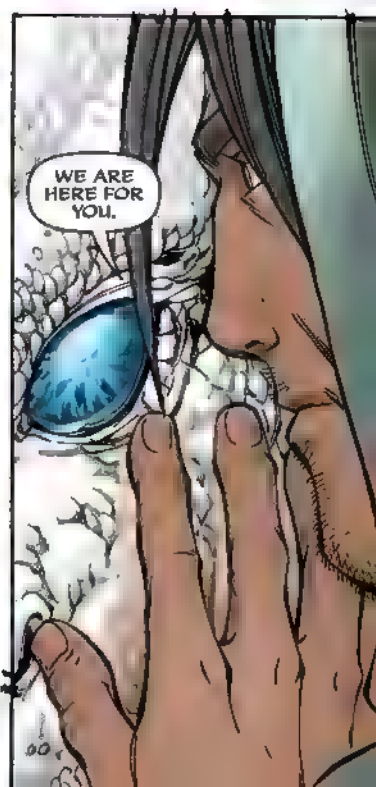
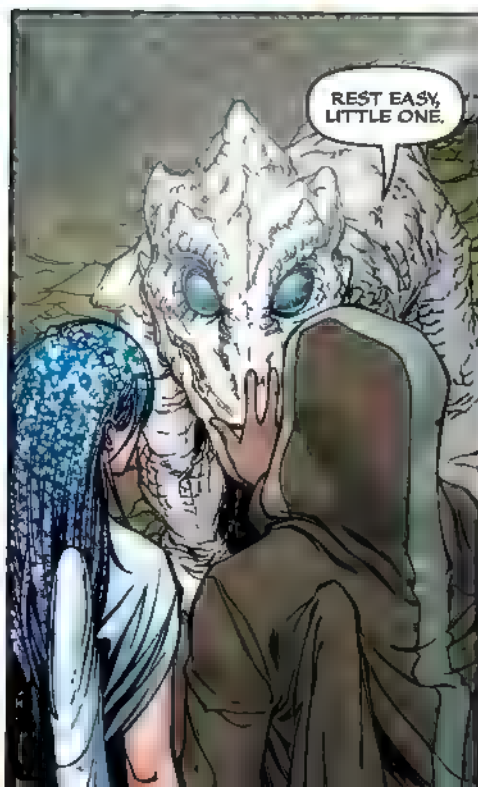
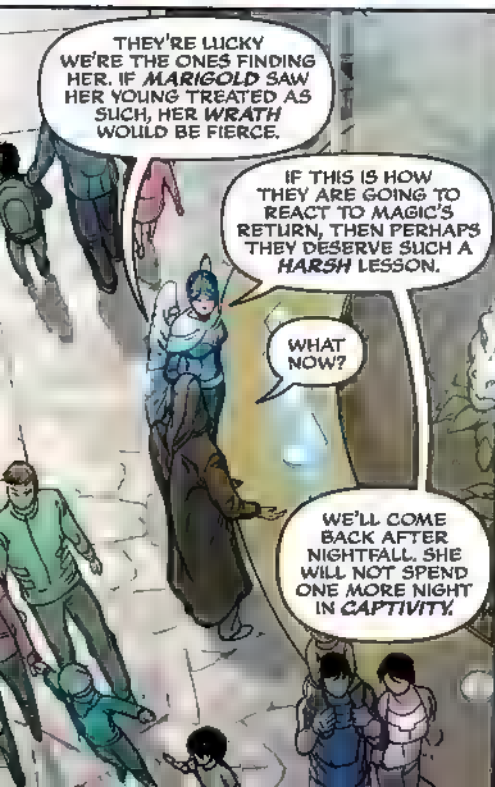
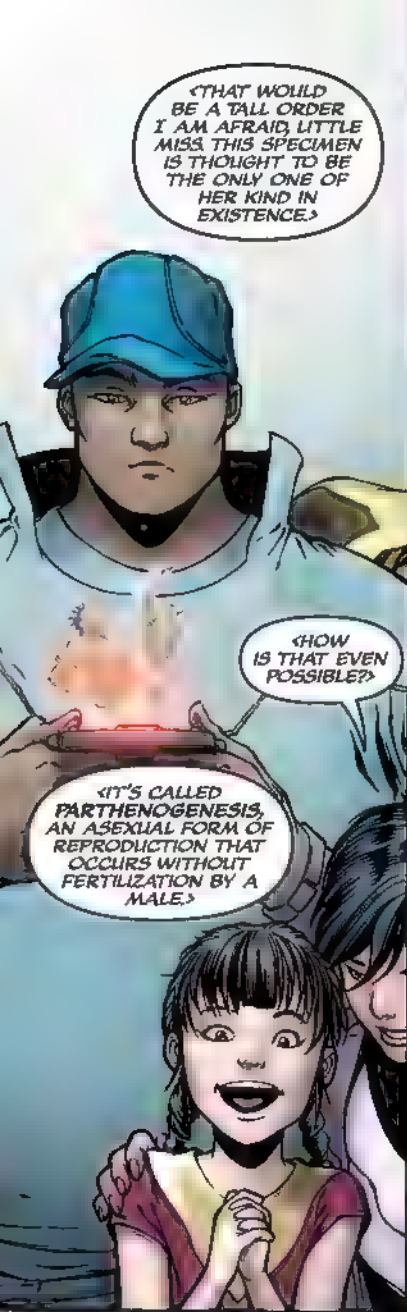
SNARING A
COUPLE OF CAR
THIEVES SEEMS WELL
BENEATH YOUR
TALENTS.



WHAT CAN
I SAY? I WAS
BORED.

THEN YOU'LL BE
PLEASED TO KNOW
THAT I HAVE A MUCH
LARGER TASK
FOR YOU.







KINK KINK

KINK

ARGH!

KINK

LET US OUT OF HERE, YOU PUNK!

DAMN, YOU'RE STRONG, **BENOIST**. NOT AS STRONG AS THIS GLASS HERE, BUT STILL -- STRONG LIKE BULL.

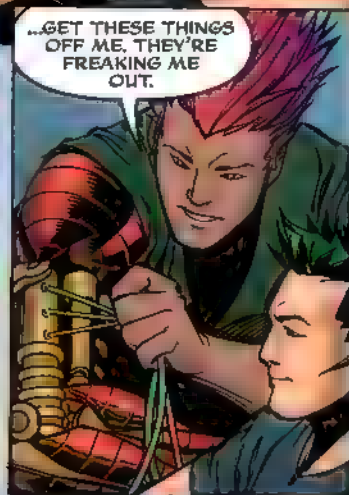
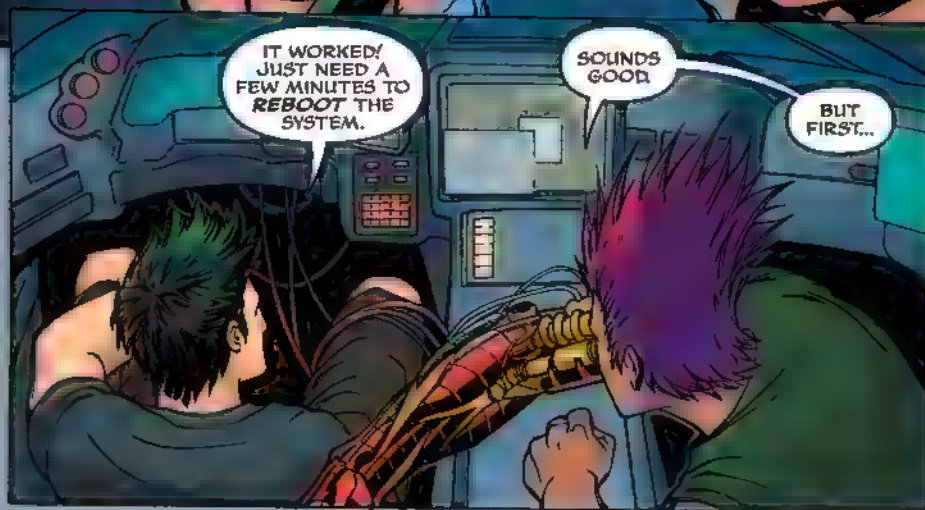
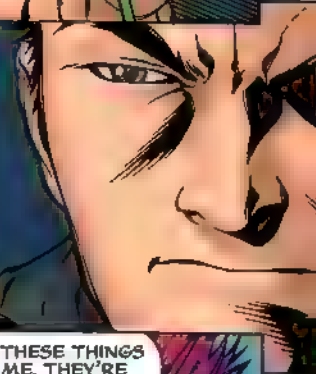
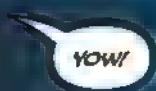
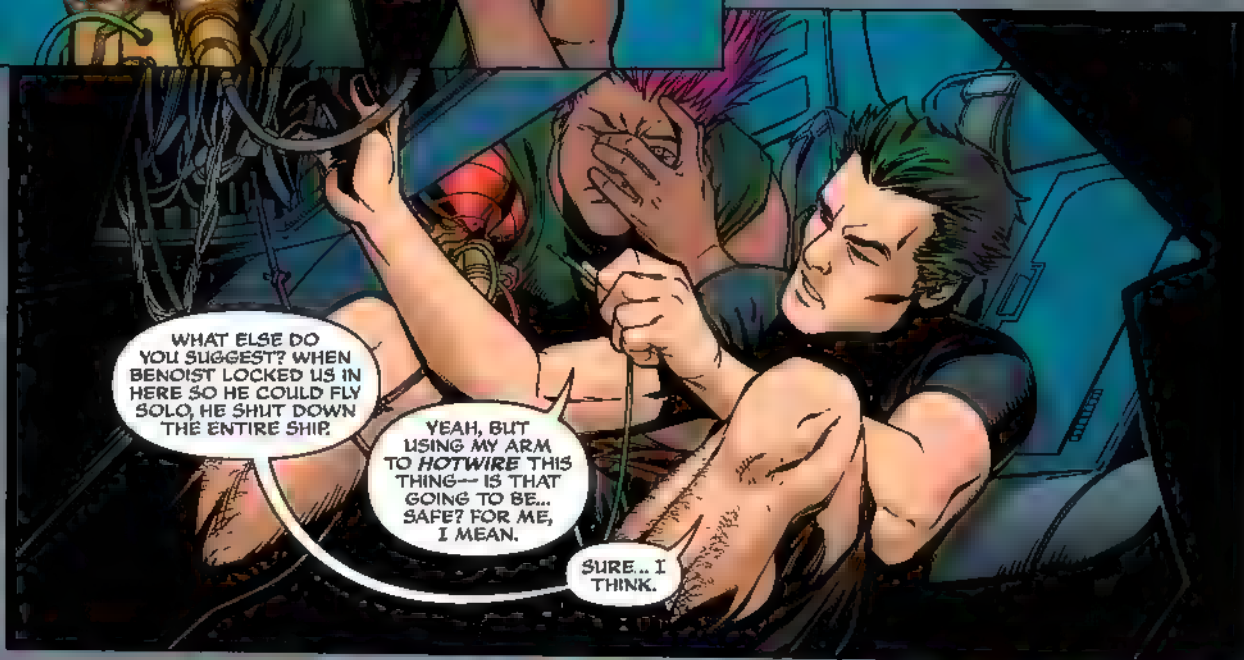
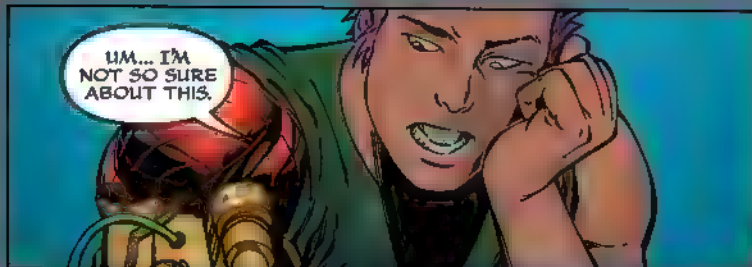
I JUST MIGHT HAVE TO GET ME AN ARM LIKE THAT.

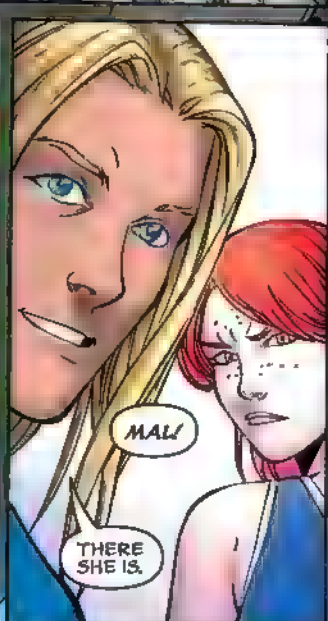
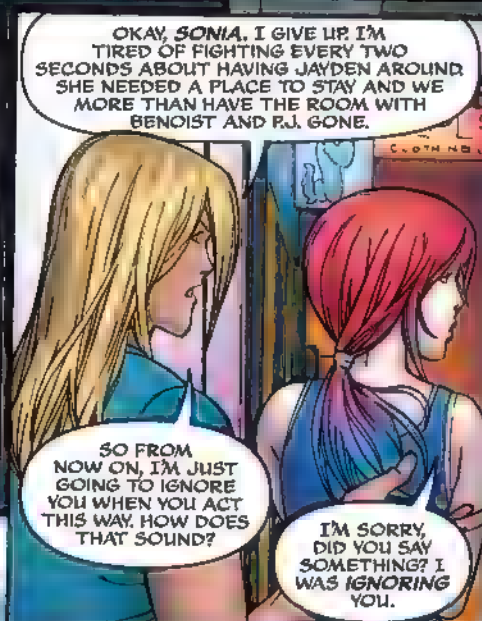
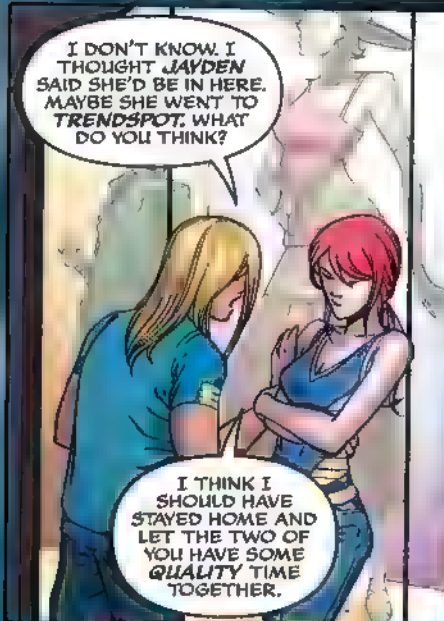
YOU'RE MESSED IN THE HEAD, KID. **GABRIEL** IS A GOOD MAN, ADMIRABLE BY EVERYONE HE EVER MET. HE DOESN'T DESERVE THIS, **JAKOBI**. HIS SYSTEMS ARE SHOT. HIS BODY WRECKED. HE'S DYING.

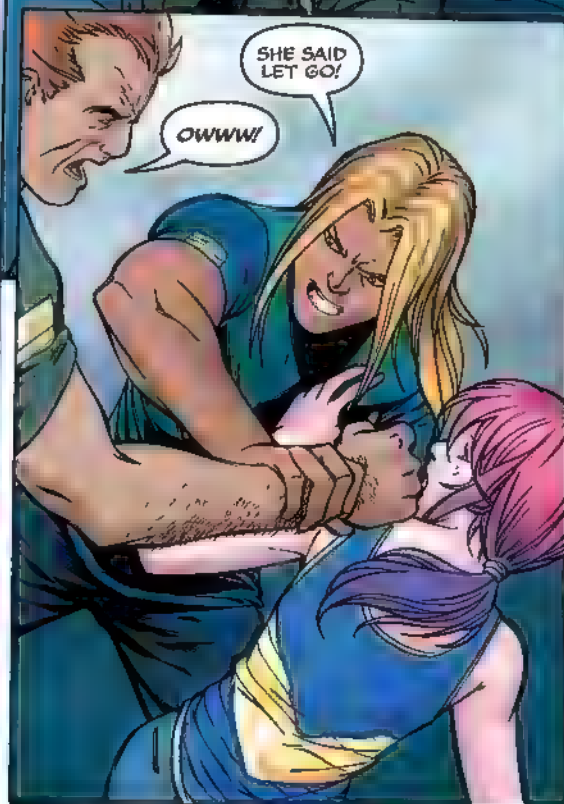
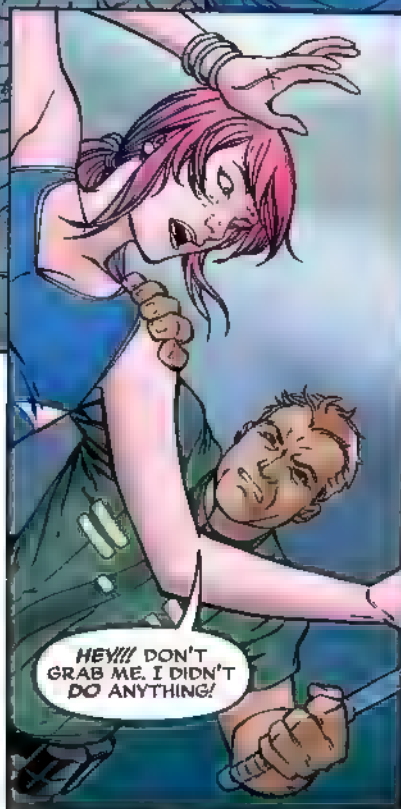
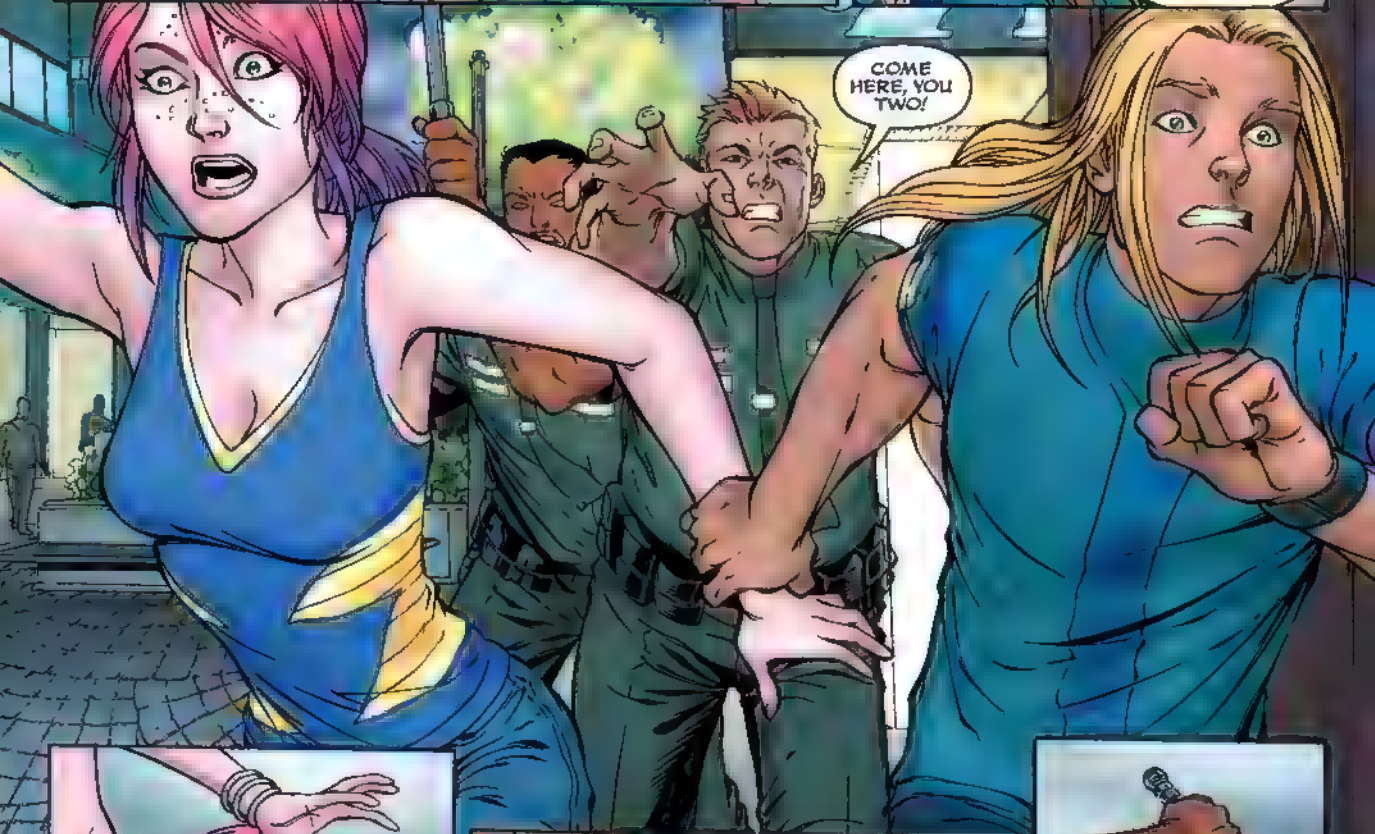
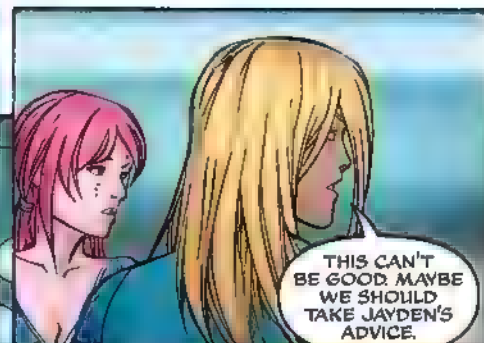
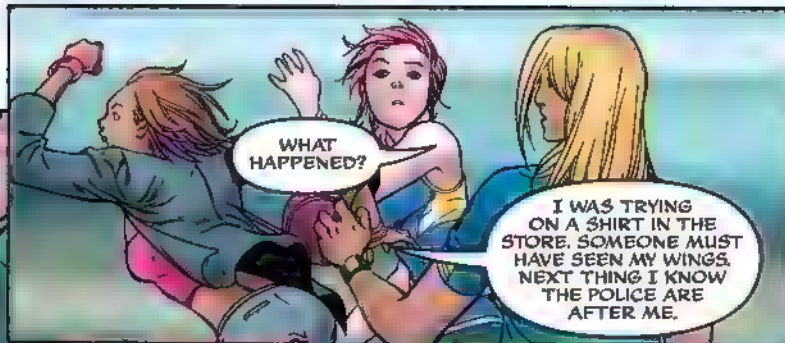
WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH BY PROLONGING HIS **SUFFERING**?

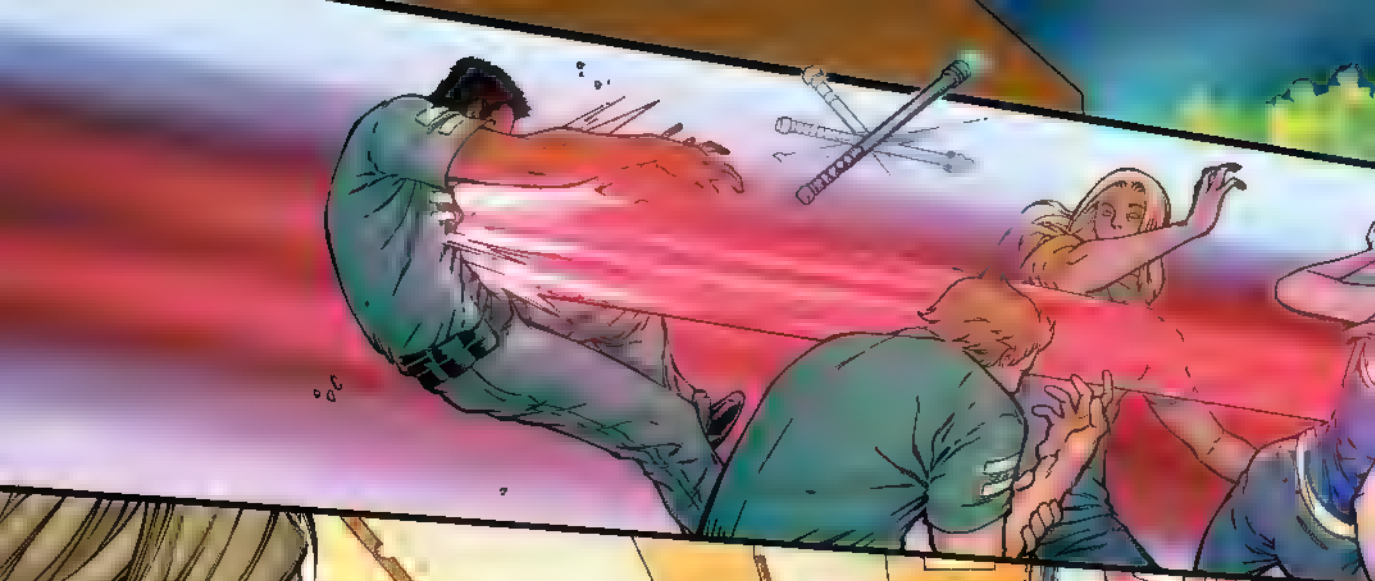
YOU JUST ANSWERED THE QUESTION. **GABRIEL** IS REVERED ON THIS ISLAND. HE'S THE MAN. PEOPLE RESPECT HIM AND THIS PLACE. AND AS HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, THEY RESPECT ME.

AS LONG AS HE STICKS AROUND, I'M THE KING OF THIS JUNK HEAP.











SO DID EVERYONE ELSE, STUPID!

YEAH, I SAW.



I'M SORRY, MAL. REALLY. BUT HE WAS GOING TO--

FORGET ABOUT IT, JAYDEN.



LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE.

WE CAN'T RUN FOREVER.

NOT PLANNING ON IT.



HANG ON!



WHAT? WHERE'D THEY GO?

...AND, IT SEEMS EVEN 50% OFF WASN'T ENOUGH FOR THESE THREE KIDS WHO REPORTEDLY STOLE OVER SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS IN JEWELRY TODAY IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AT THE ELFINO PROMENADE.

4NEWS

ELFINO PROMENADE

THAT'S JUST GREAT, WAY TO GO, JAYDEN. I'M JUST CURIOUS, DOES TROUBLE FOLLOW YOU? OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?

SHUT UP, SONIA!

I DIDN'T STEAL ANYTHING. THEY MADE THAT STORY UP.

I WAS THINKING OF MAL, SONIA. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE'RE THE DIFFERENT ONES. WE'RE THE **OUTCASTS**.

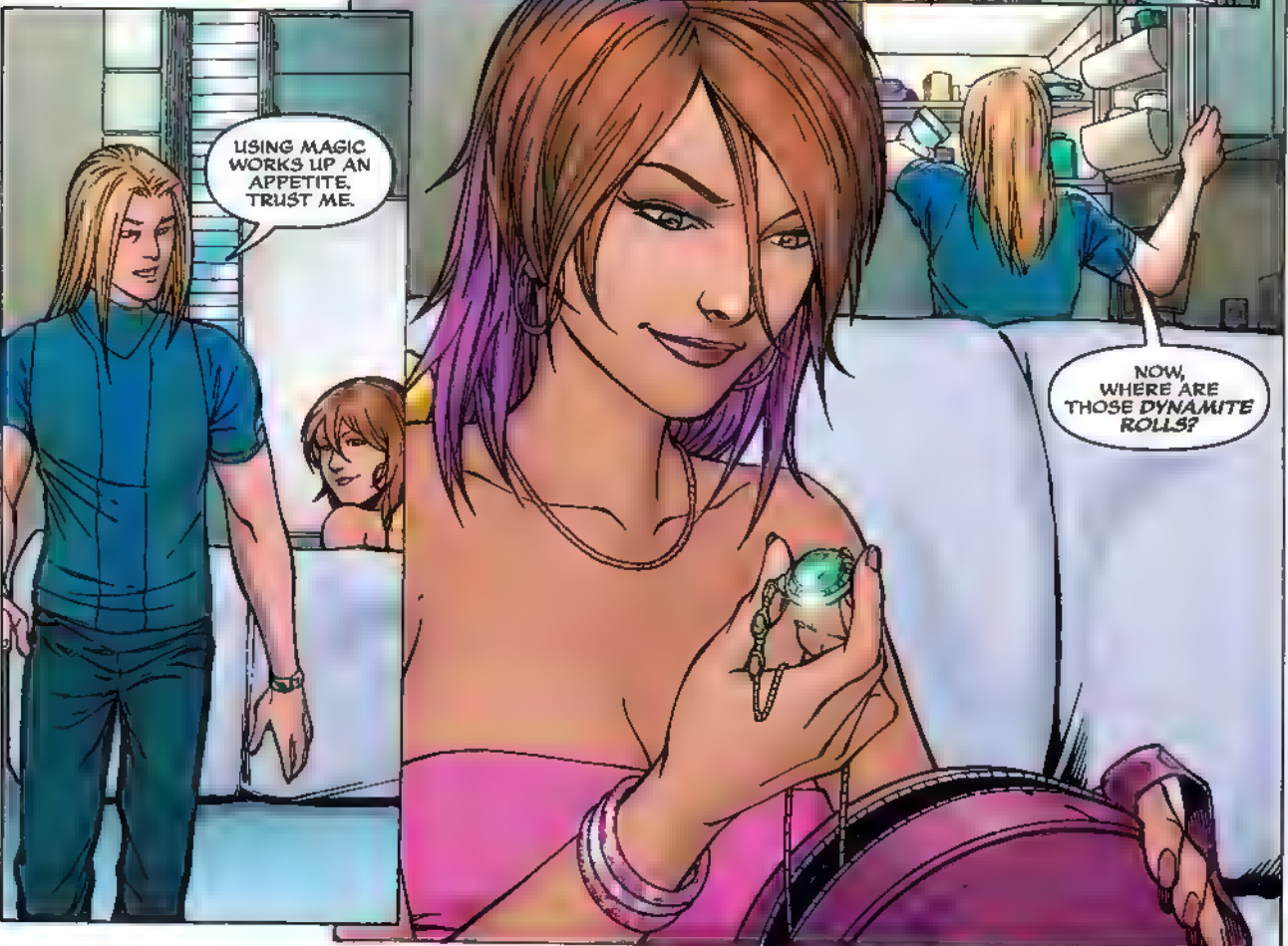
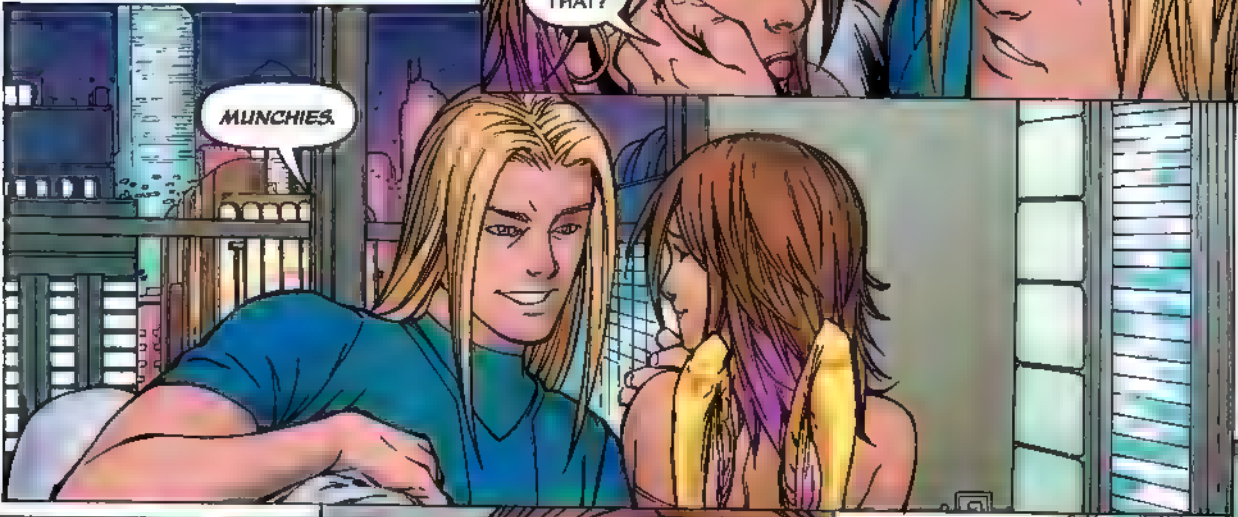
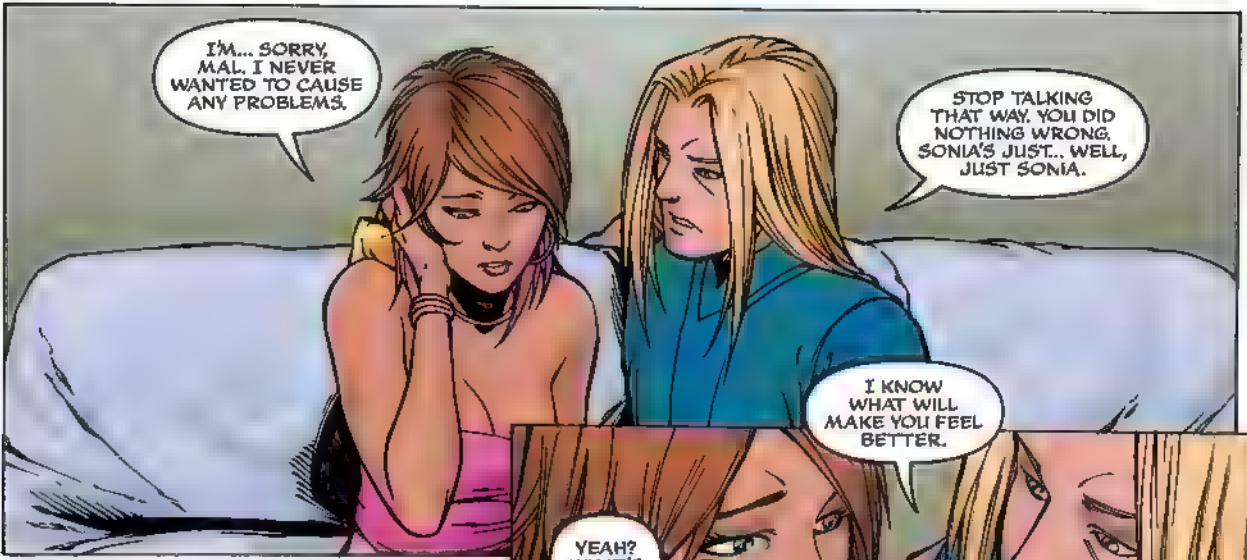
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LIKE US.

AND WHAT ABOUT BLASTING AWAY AT THE POLICE?? YOU THINK THAT HELPS?

LIKE US? US?

SO THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE, HUH?

SONIA... WAIT.



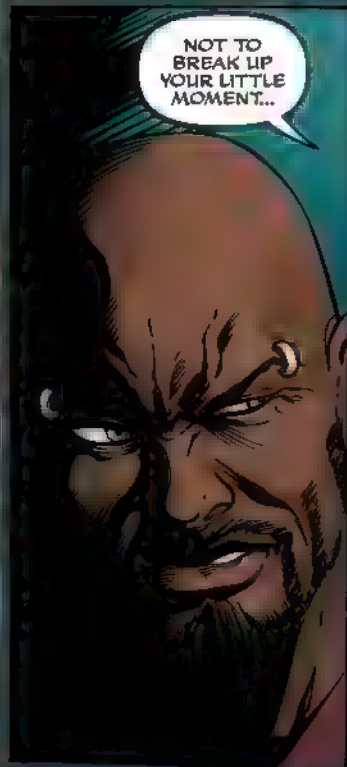


ONCE OUT
OF NATURE I SHALL
NEVER TAKE MY BODILY
FORM FROM ANY
NATURAL THING...

...BUT SUCH
A FORM AS GRECIAN
GOLDSMITHS MAKE
OF HAMMERED GOLD
AND GOLD ENAMELLING
TO KEEP A DROWSY
EMPEROR AWAKE; OR
SET UPON A GOLDEN
BOUGH TO SING...



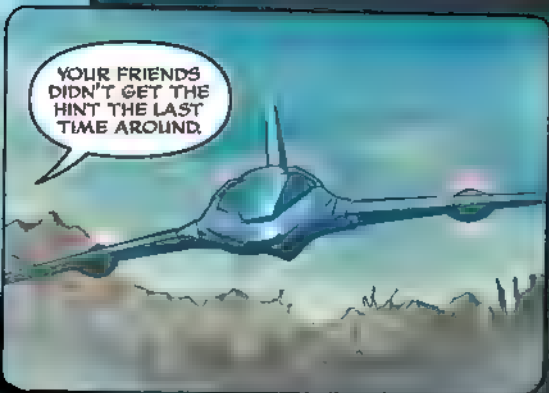
...TO LORDS
AND LADIES OF
BYZANTIUM OF
WHAT IS PAST; OR
PASSING, OR TO
COME.



NOT TO
BREAK UP
YOUR LITTLE
MOMENT...



...BUT I
THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT BE BORED AND
IN NEED OF SOME
ENTERTAINMENT.



YOUR FRIENDS
DIDN'T GET THE
HINT THE LAST
TIME AROUND.



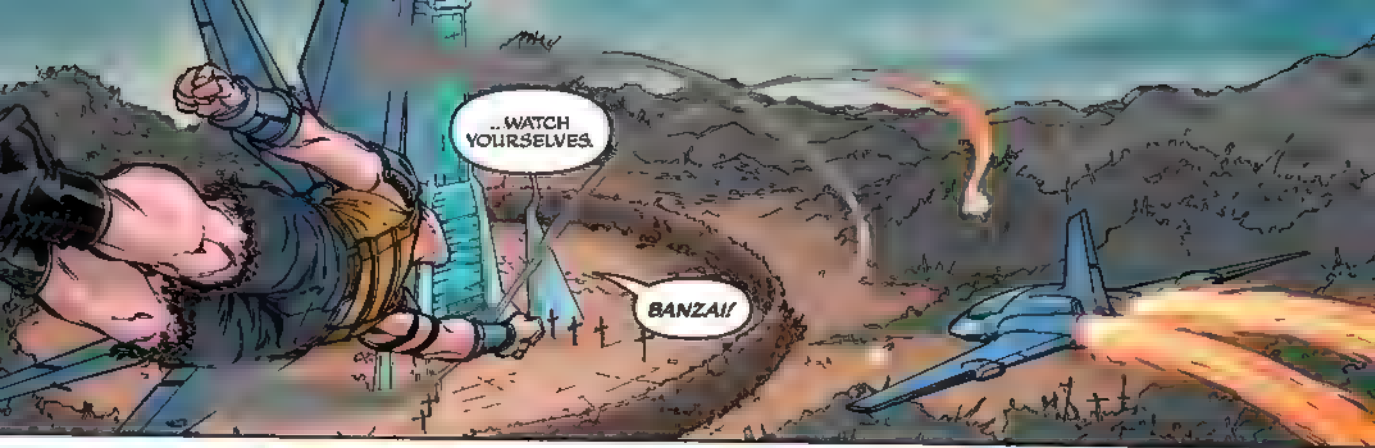
NO!

DON'T WORRY
THOUGH. I KNOW
HOW TO HANDLE
SLOW LEARNERS.



JAKOBI!!!

DAMMIT
BOYS...





GOTCHA!



THAT HAD TO BE SMART.
WOULDN'T YOU SAY, KAL?



HUH???



IT'S EMPTY.

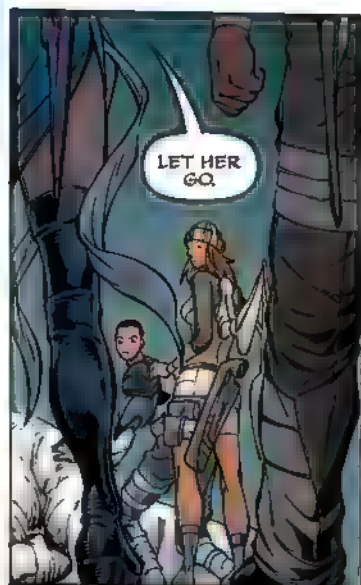
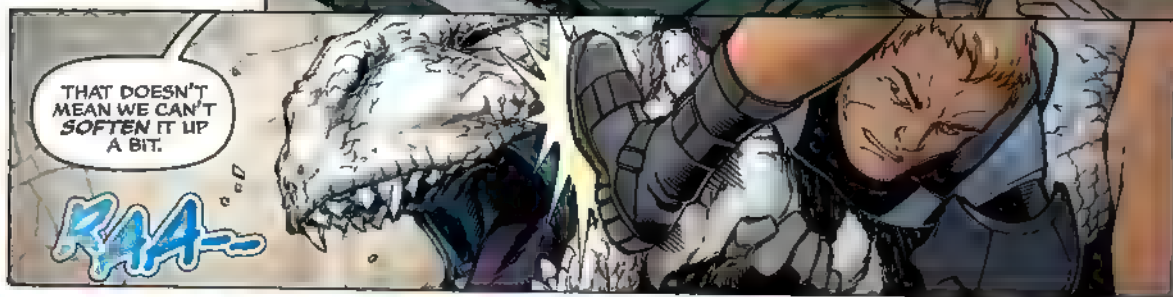
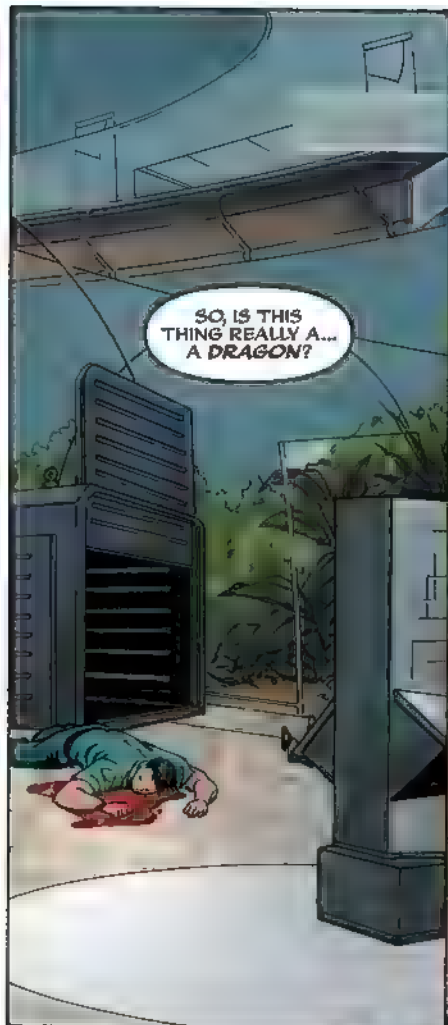


WHERE'D THEY GO?



HEY LOSERS.
REMEMBER US?





THE
DRAGON'S
WITH US.



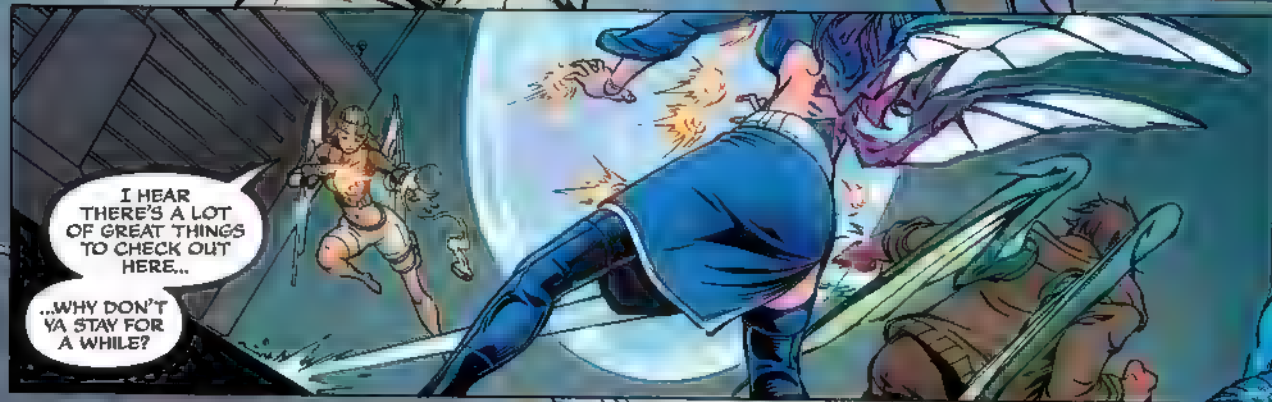
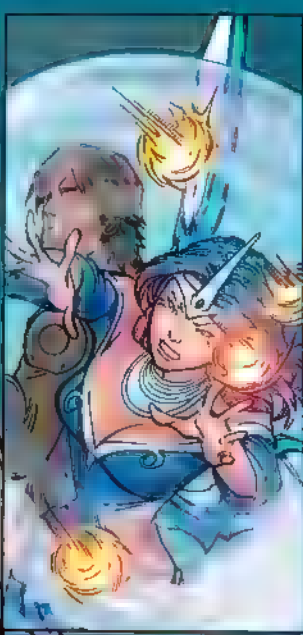


NICE
LIGHTSHOW, BUT
I'VE SEEN IT ALL
BEFORE. YOU MUST
BE GRACE.

RAINIER
SENDS HIS
BEST...



...ME.

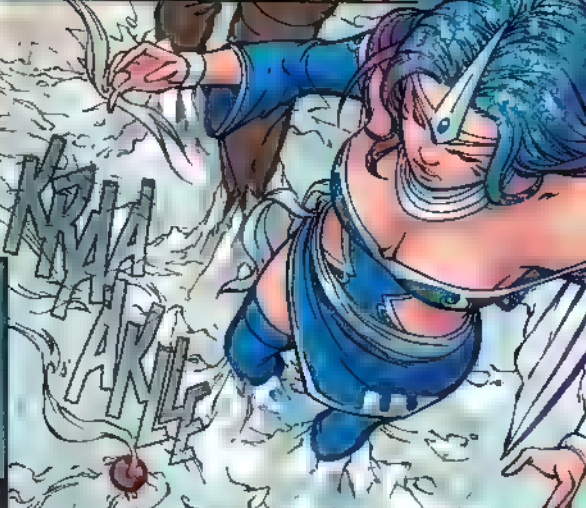


I HEAR
THERE'S A LOT OF
GREAT THINGS
TO CHECK OUT
HERE...

...WHY DON'T
YA STAY FOR
A WHILE?



HEY???





THAT TAKES CARE OF THEM.
LET'S ROLL.

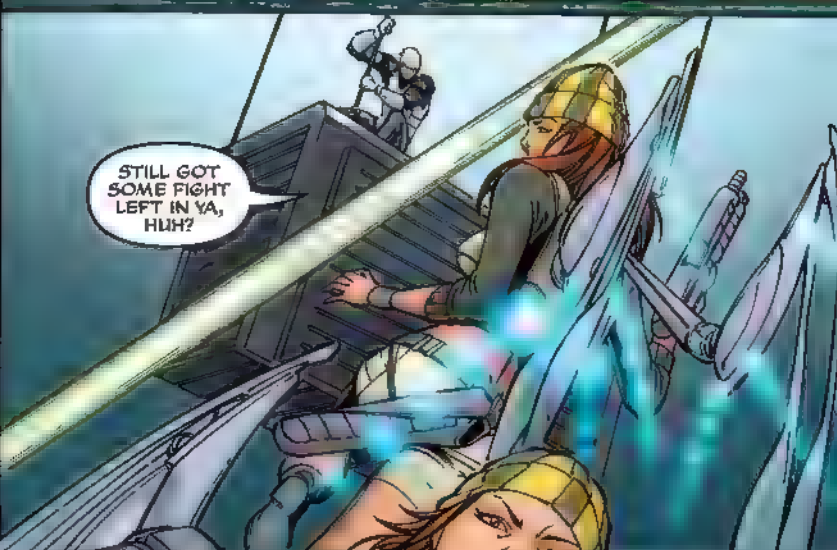
LOOKS LIKE ICE.

BUT IT'S HARDER THAN STEEL.

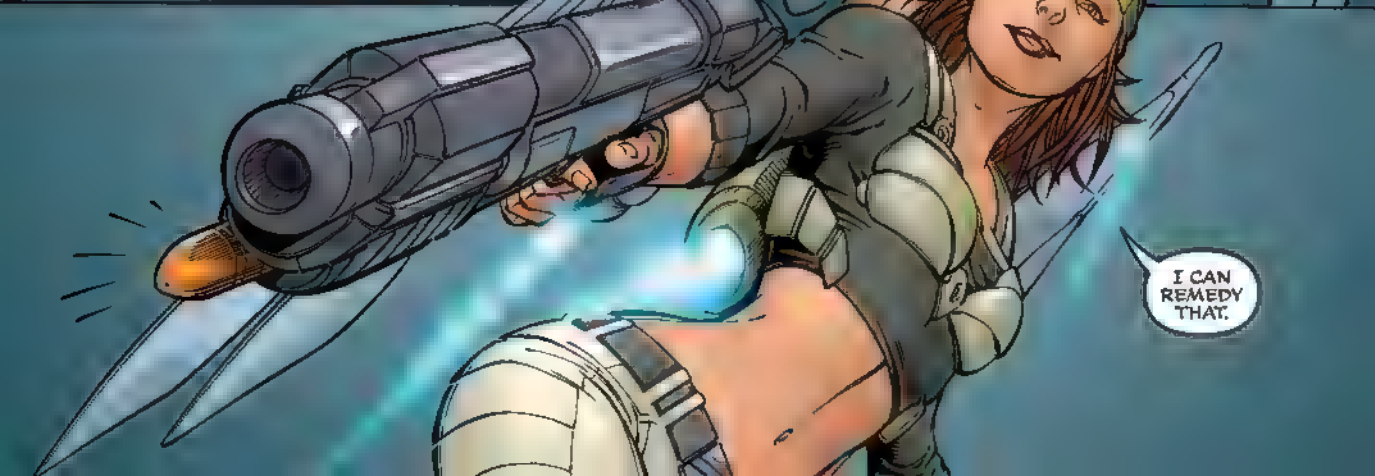


I CAN'T BREAK FREE.

THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!



STILL GOT SOME FIGHT LEFT IN YA, HUH?



I CAN REMEDY THAT.

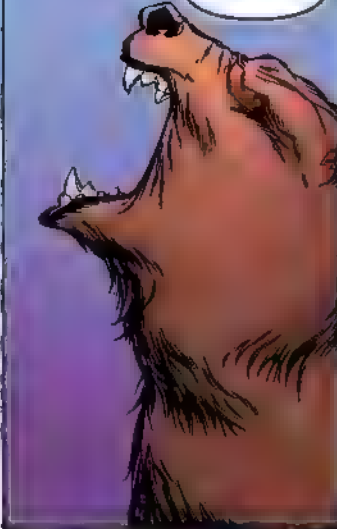
ANIMALS
DON'T LIKE THIS
SOUND VERY
MUCH.



KIND OF
SETS THEM
OFF.



DRIVES
THEM MAD...



...AND QUITE
VICIOUS.





ENJOY!

GRRRR

RAW



VOL. 2

#4

OF 9
COVER A

SOULFIRE





VOL. 2

#4

OF 9
COVER B

SOULFIRE





VOL. 2

#4

OF 9
COVER C

SOULFIRE



ASPEN
Vol. 2

#4

OF 9
COVER D

SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE FOUR OF NINE

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THROUGHOUT HISTORY,
THE TIGER HAS BEEN
A SYMBOL OF CUNNING
AND STRENGTH.

A TRULY
MAJESTIC
CREATURE.

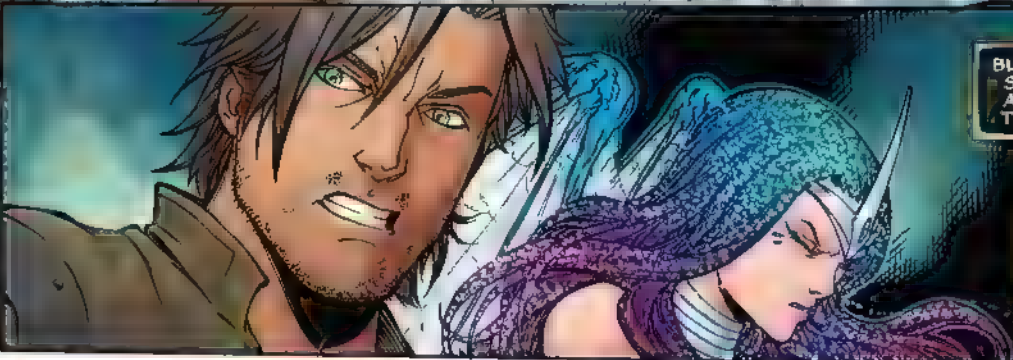


BEIJING, CHINA.



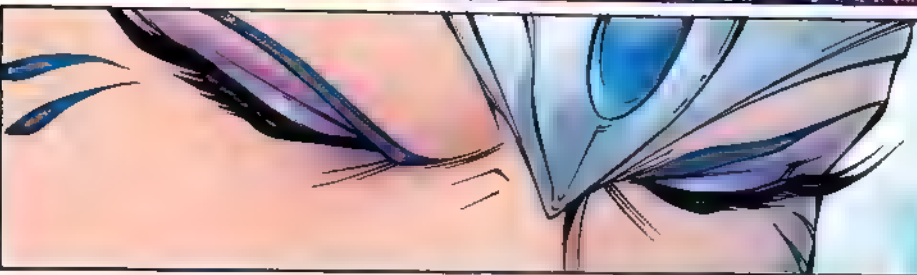
IN TRUTH, THEY
ARE ALL MAJESTIC
CREATURES.

CAGED AGAINST
THEIR WILL AND PUT
ON DISPLAY, IT IS EASY
TO UNDERSTAND
THEIR RAGE.



BUT THEY FAIL TO
SEE THAT SEPH
AND I ARE NOT
THEIR CAPTORS.

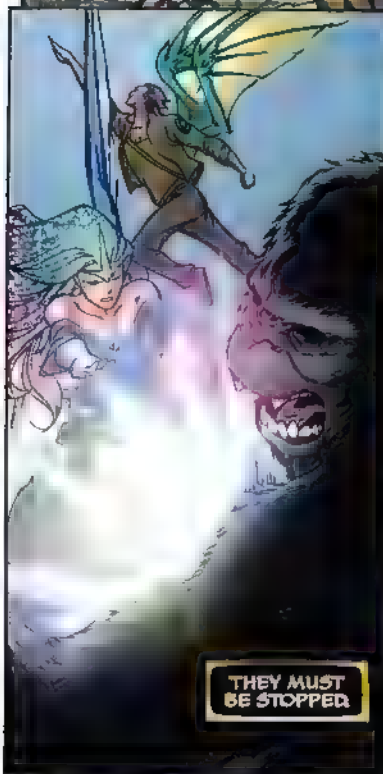
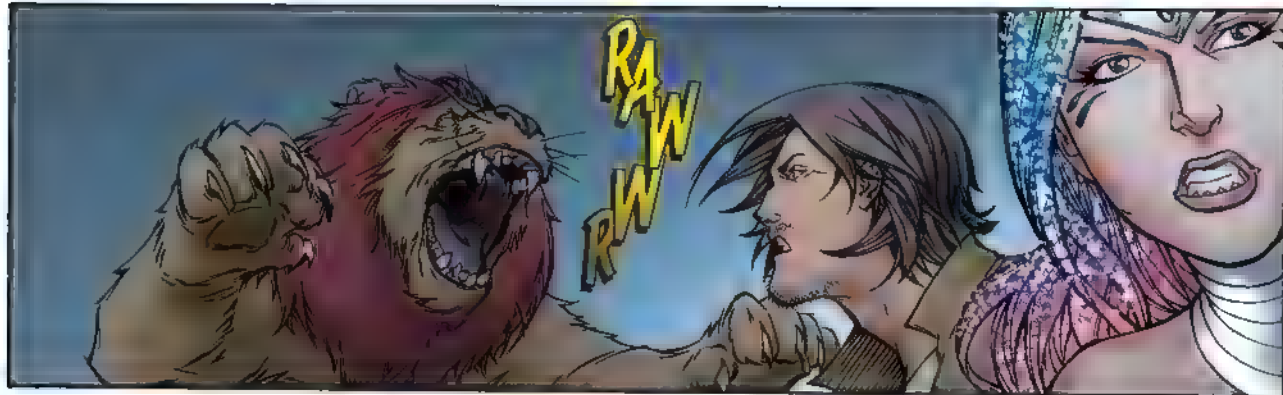
NOR ARE WE
ANYTHING LIKE
THE PEOPLE THAT
HELD THEM IN
CAPTIVITY.



I DO NOT WISH
TO HARM THEM...



ONLY TO REMIND THEM
OF THE MAGIC TO BE
FOUND IN THIS WORLD.

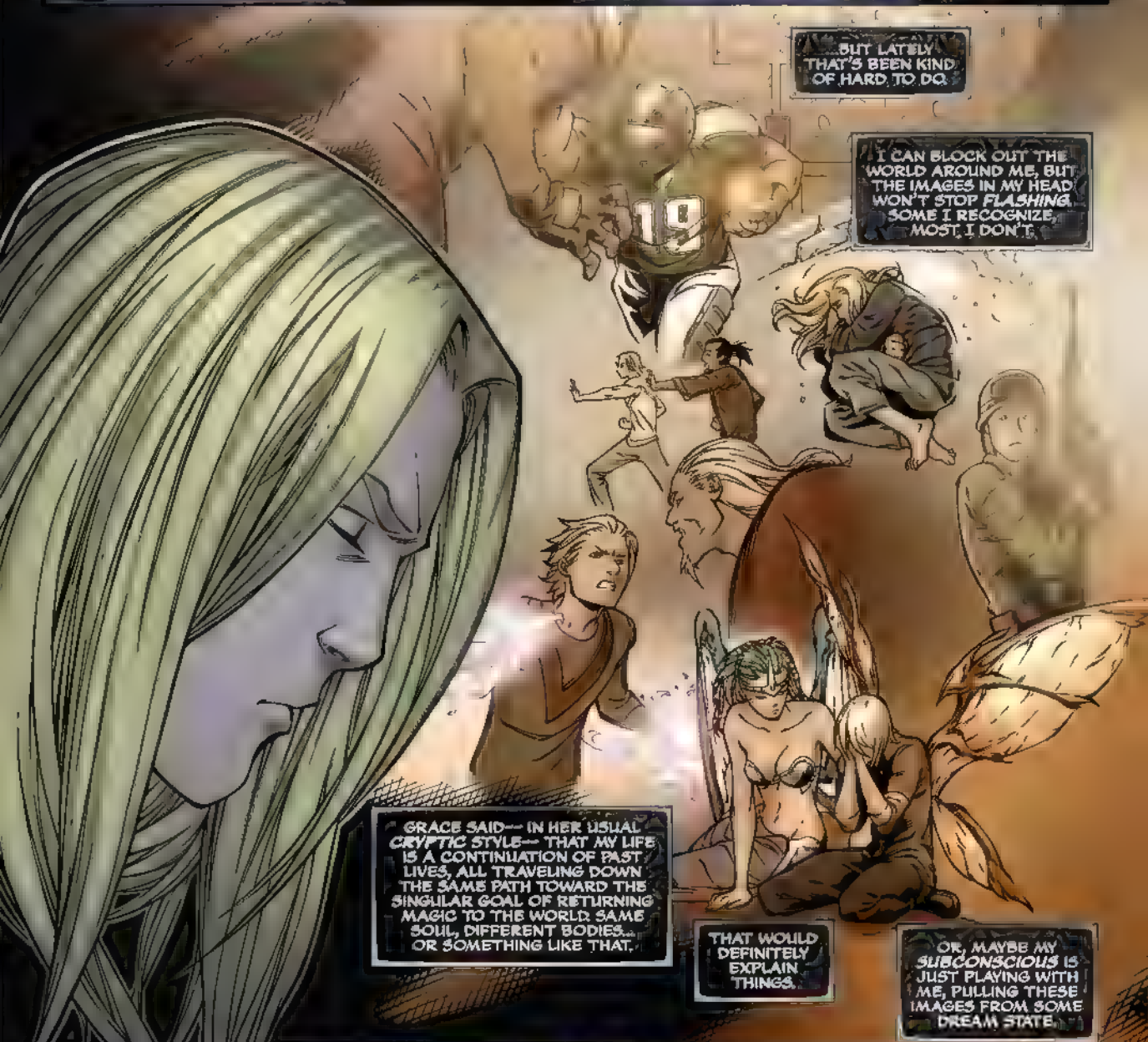




I'VE OFTEN TRIED
TO MAKE SENSE
OF MY LIFE...

BUT LATELY
THAT'S BEEN KIND
OF HARD TO DO.

I CAN BLOCK OUT THE
WORLD AROUND ME, BUT
THE IMAGES IN MY HEAD
WON'T STOP FLASHING.
SOME I RECOGNIZE,
MOST, I DON'T.



GRACE SAID— IN HER USUAL
CRYPTIC STYLE— THAT MY LIFE
IS A CONTINUATION OF PAST
LIVES, ALL TRAVELING DOWN
THE SAME PATH TOWARD THE
SINGULAR GOAL OF RETURNING
MAGIC TO THE WORLD. SAME
SOUL, DIFFERENT BODIES...
OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

THAT WOULD
DEFINITELY
EXPLAIN
THINGS.

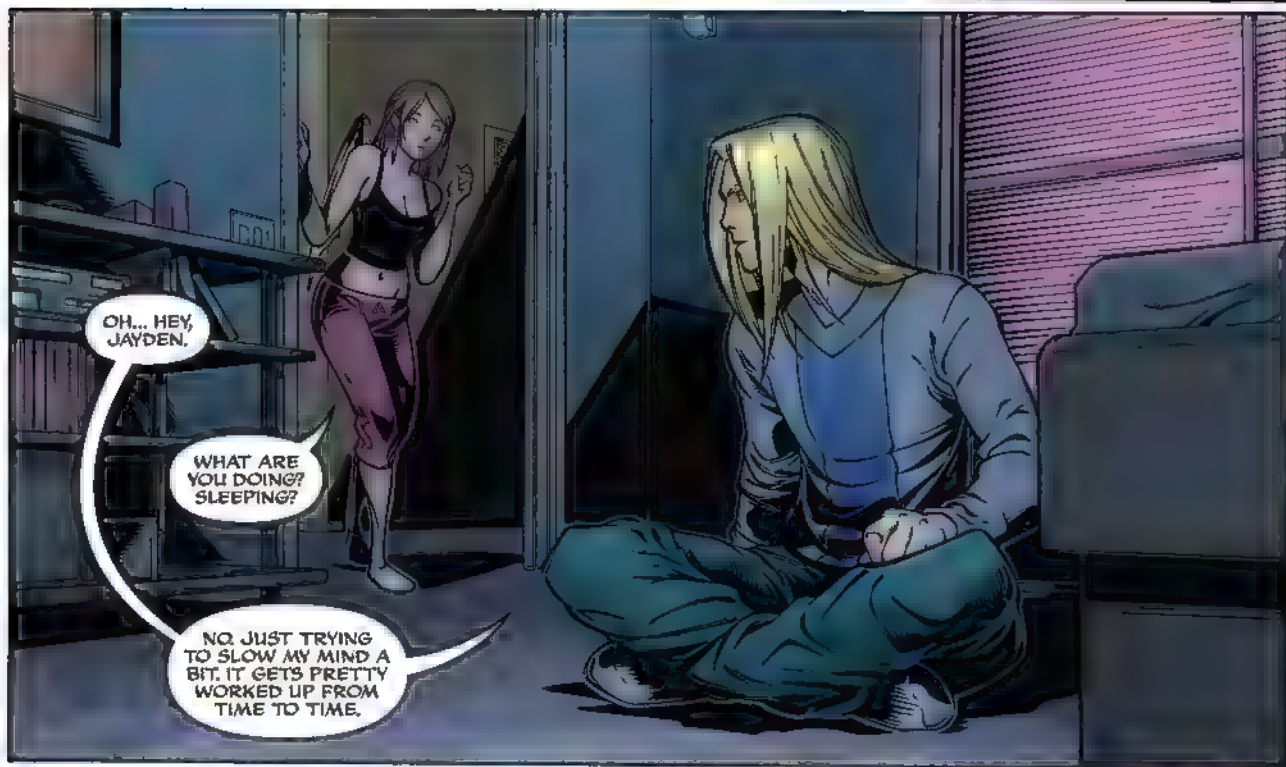
OR, MAYBE MY
SUBCONSCIOUS IS
JUST PLAYING WITH
ME, PULLING THESE
IMAGES FROM SOME
DREAM STATE.



THEN AGAIN, I
COULD JUST
BE CRAZY.



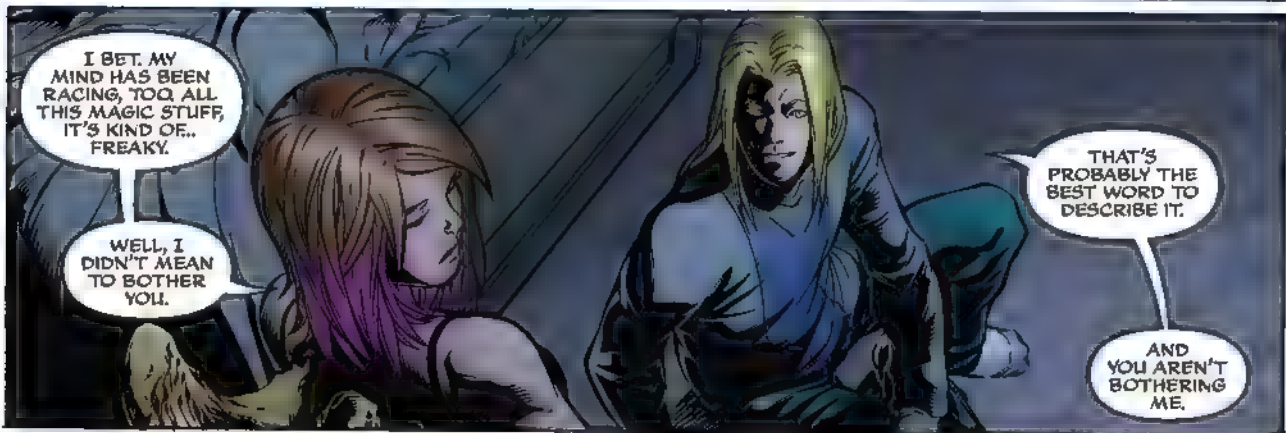
SONIA?



OH... HEY, JAYDEN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? SLEEPING?

NO. JUST TRYING TO SLOW MY MIND A BIT. IT GETS PRETTY WORKED UP FROM TIME TO TIME.



I BET. MY MIND HAS BEEN RACING, TOO, ALL THIS MAGIC STUFF, IT'S KIND OF... FREAKY.

WELL, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BOTHER YOU.

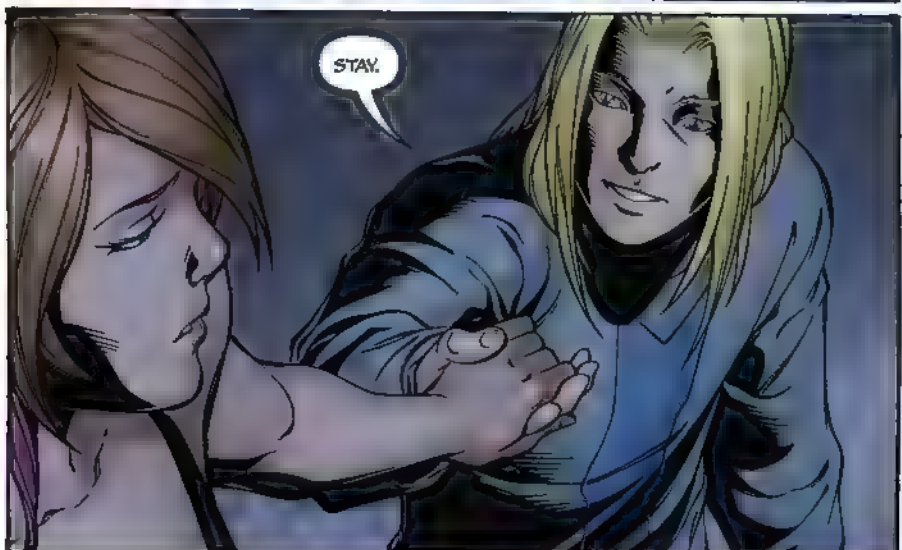
THAT'S PROBABLY THE BEST WORD TO DESCRIBE IT.

AND YOU AREN'T BOTHERING ME.

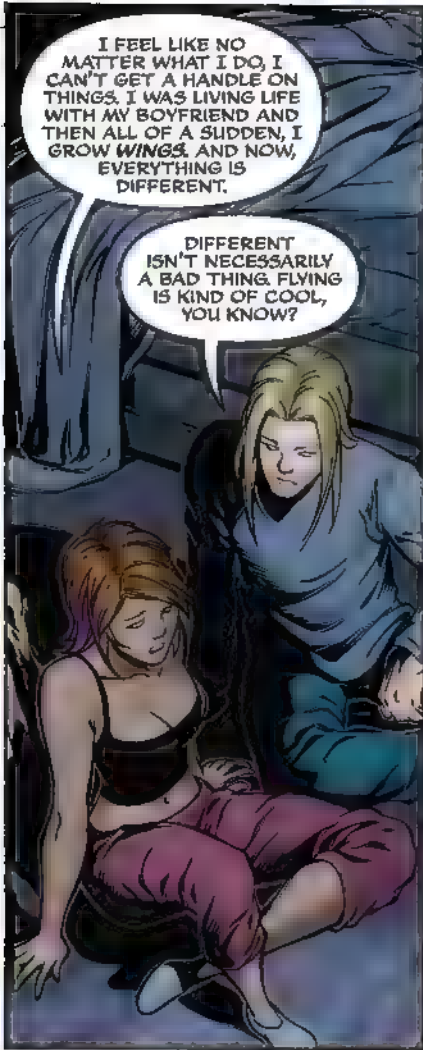


I CAN GO.

IT'S OKAY, REALLY.

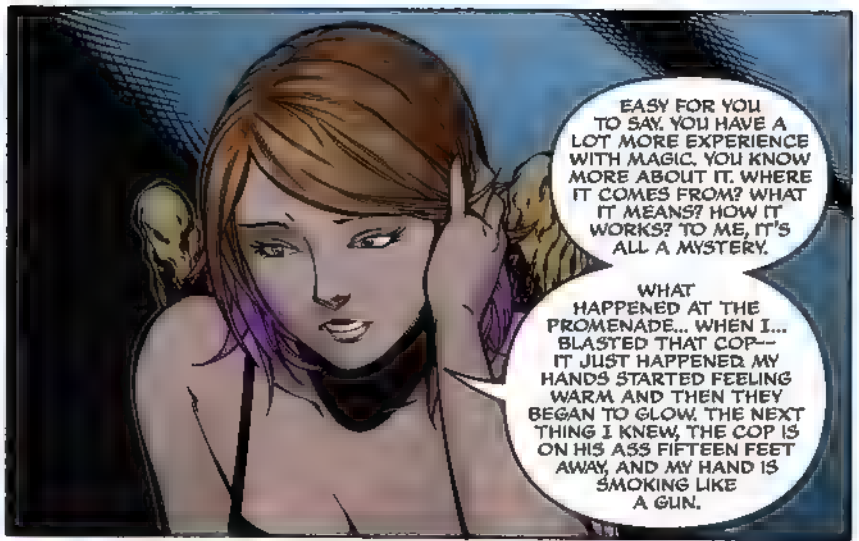


STAY.



I FEEL LIKE NO MATTER WHAT I DO, I CAN'T GET A HANDLE ON THINGS. I WAS LIVING LIFE WITH MY BOYFRIEND AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, I GROW *WINGS*. AND NOW, EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT.

DIFFERENT ISN'T NECESSARILY A BAD THING. FLYING IS KIND OF COOL, YOU KNOW?

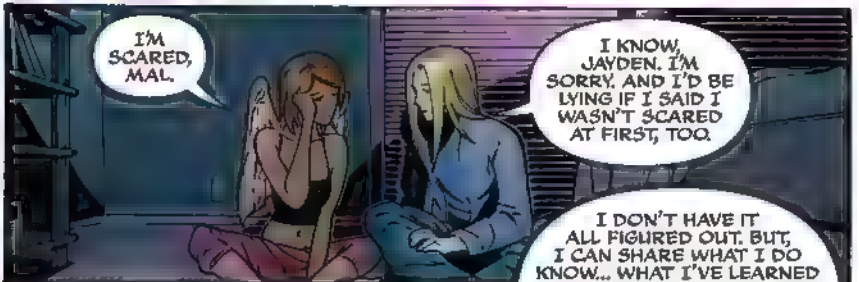


EASY FOR YOU TO SAY. YOU HAVE A LOT MORE EXPERIENCE WITH MAGIC. YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT IT. WHERE IT COMES FROM? WHAT IT MEANS? HOW IT WORKS? TO ME, IT'S ALL A MYSTERY.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PROMENADE... WHEN I... BLASTED THAT COP-- IT JUST HAPPENED. MY HANDS STARTED FEELING WARM AND THEN THEY BEGAN TO GLOW. THE NEXT THING I KNEW, THE COP IS ON HIS ASS FIFTEEN FEET AWAY, AND MY HAND IS SMOKING LIKE A GUN.



I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT HIM. I DON'T WANT TO HURT ANYBODY.



I'M SCARED, MAL.

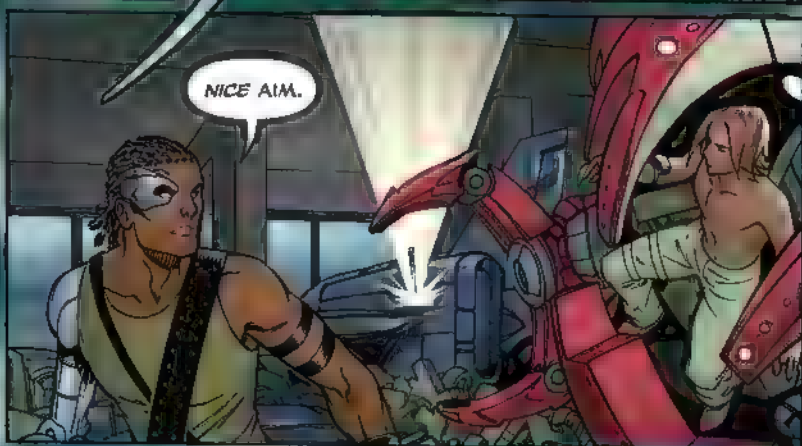
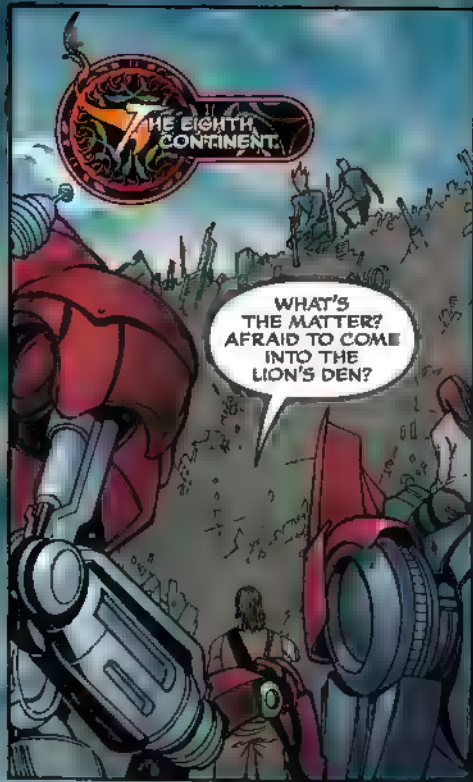
I KNOW, JAYDEN. I'M SORRY. AND I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I WASN'T SCARED AT FIRST, TOO.

I DON'T HAVE IT ALL FIGURED OUT. BUT, I CAN SHARE WHAT I DO KNOW... WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM GRACE AND REN AND THE OTHERS. IT WON'T EVEN BEGIN TO ANSWER ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS. BUT, AT LEAST YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CONTROL IT BETTER.



YOU'D DO THAT?

SURE.

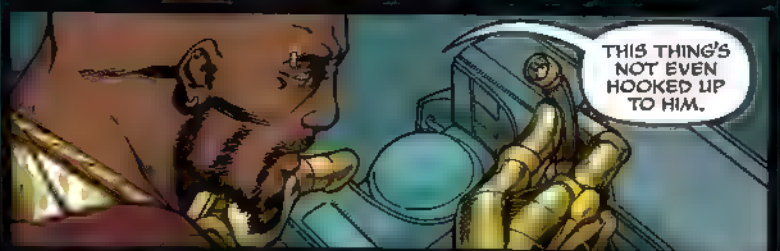




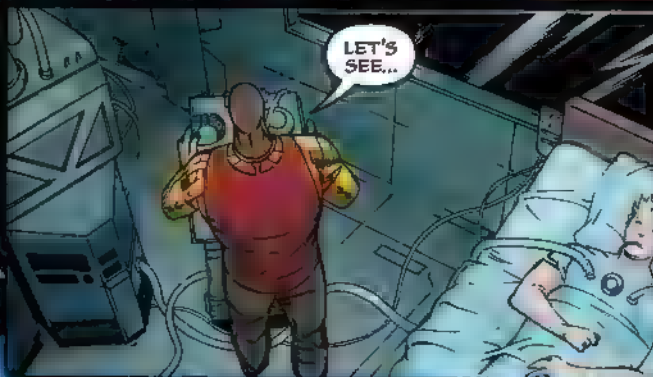
GOOD MOVE,
BOYS, BUT YOU'RE
STILL OUT-
NUMBERED.



GOTTA
BE SOME
WAY OUTTA
HERE.



THIS THING'S
NOT EVEN
HOOKED UP
TO HIM.



LET'S
SEE...



...GUESS I'LL
MAKE JUST AS GOOD
OF A CONDUIT AS
ANYTHING.



ARRGGHH!!!



AIN'T GONNA
OUTRUN ME,
FOOL.

UNHHH!

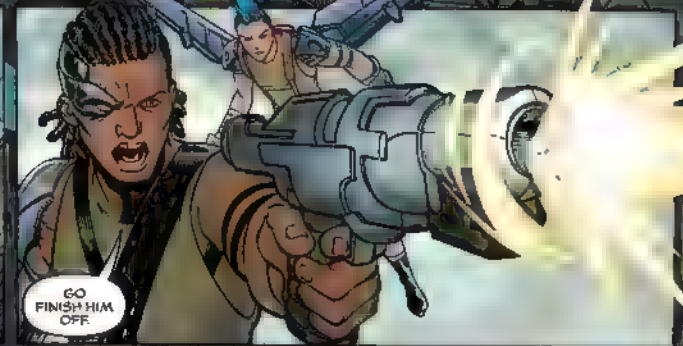
FETCH
BOW

WHAT??

YOU'RE NOT
THE ONLY ONE
WITH TOYS.



I'VE GOT 'EM
PINNED DOWN.



GO
FINISH HIM
OFF.

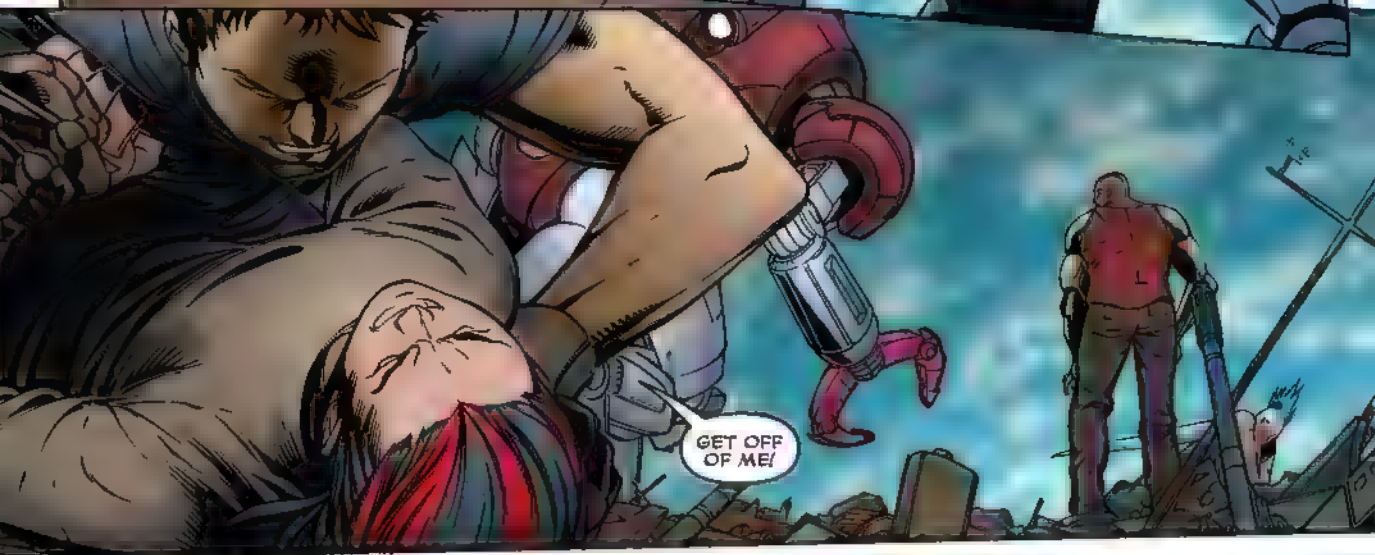
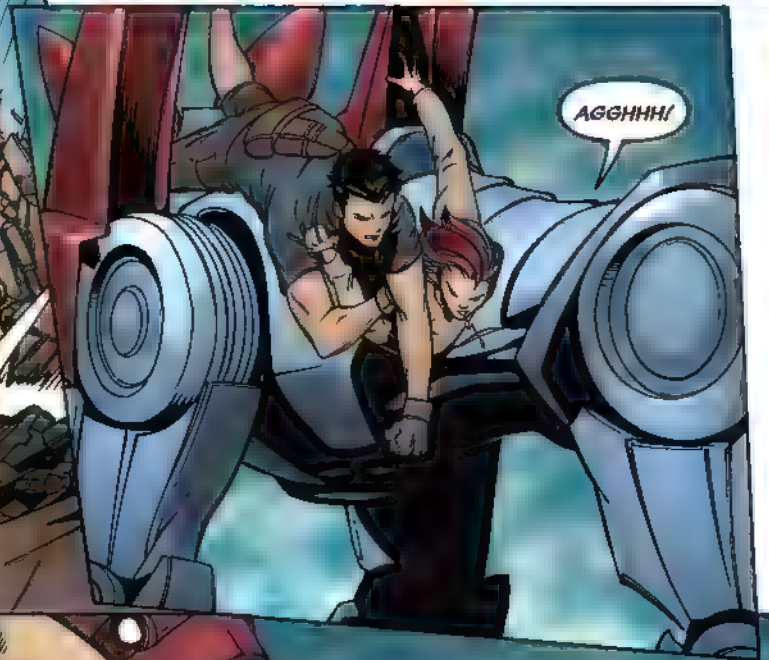
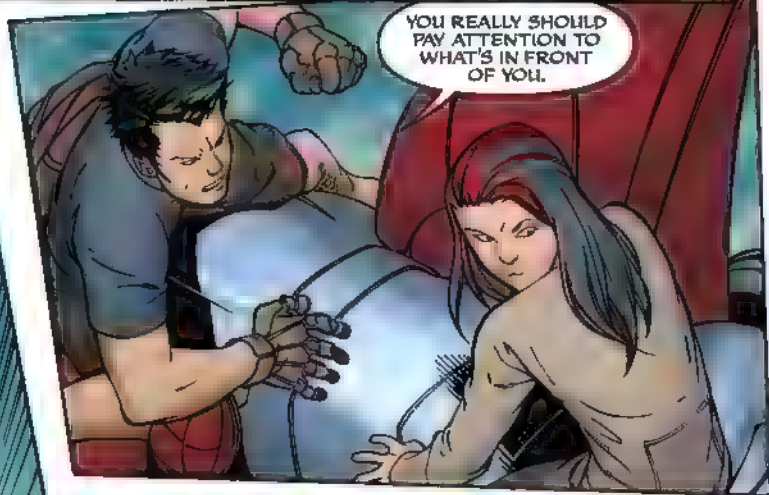
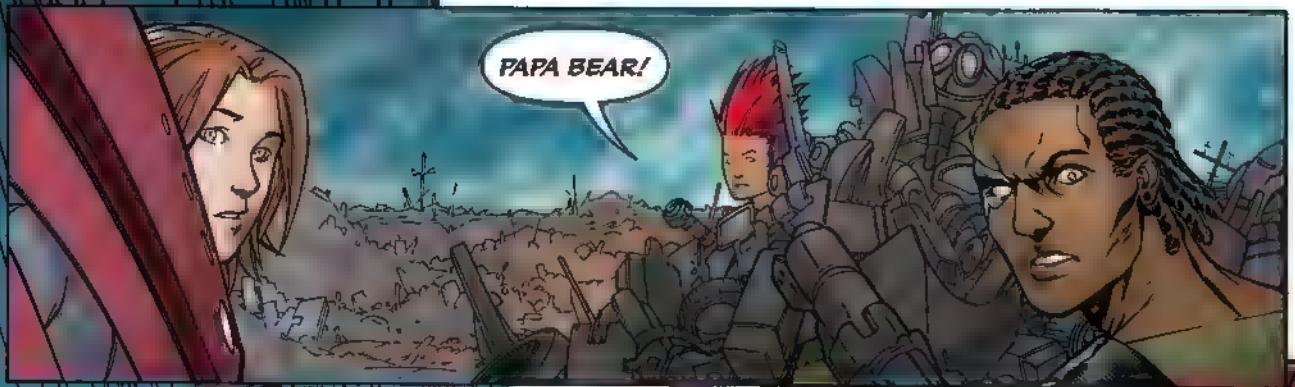


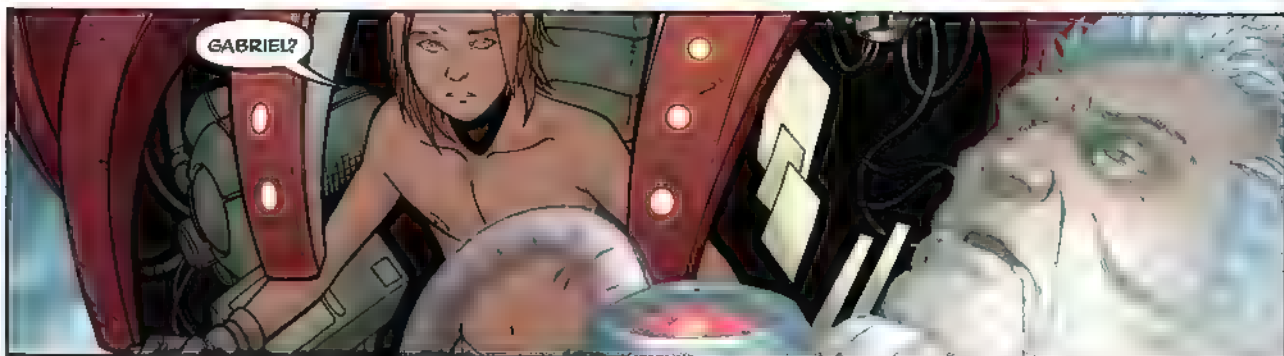
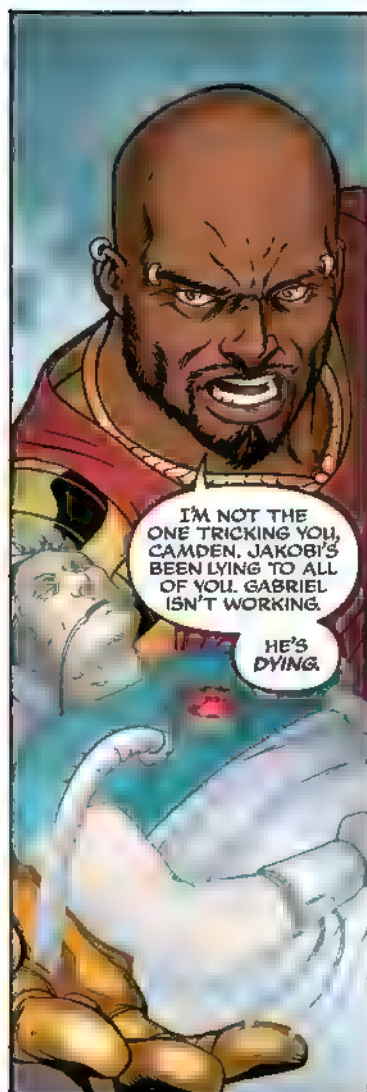
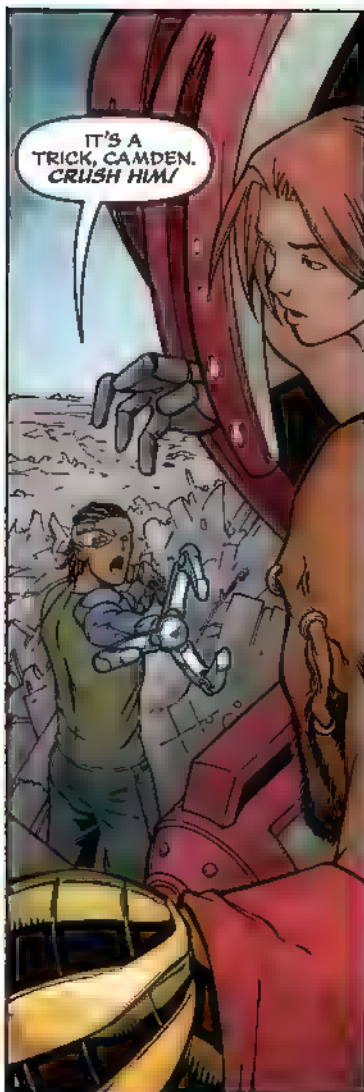
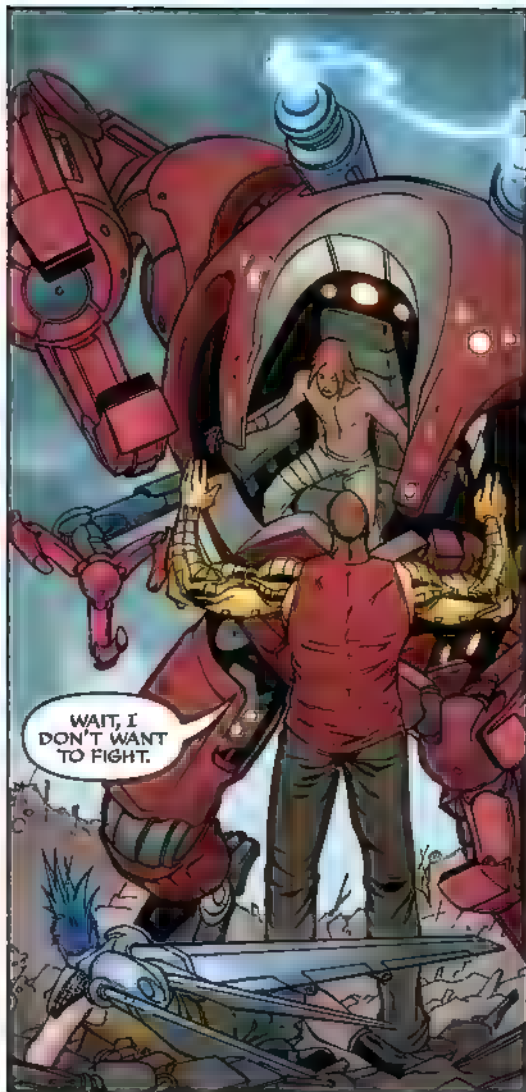
LIKE
HELL YOU
WILL.

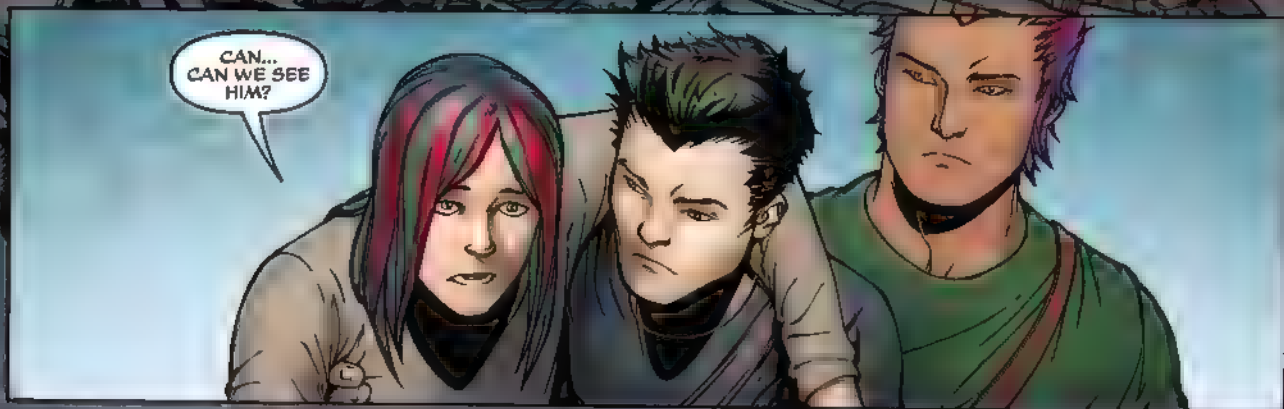
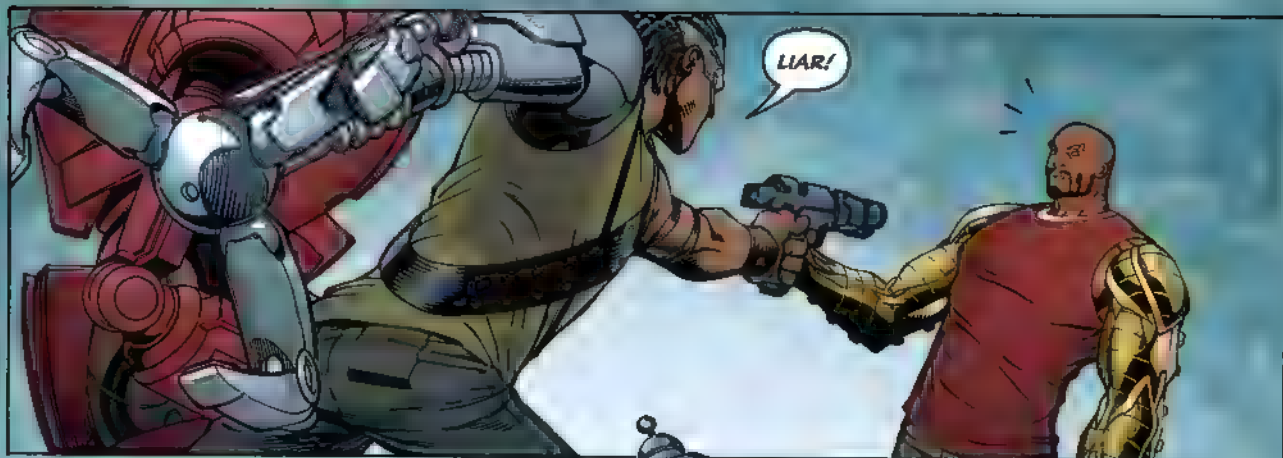


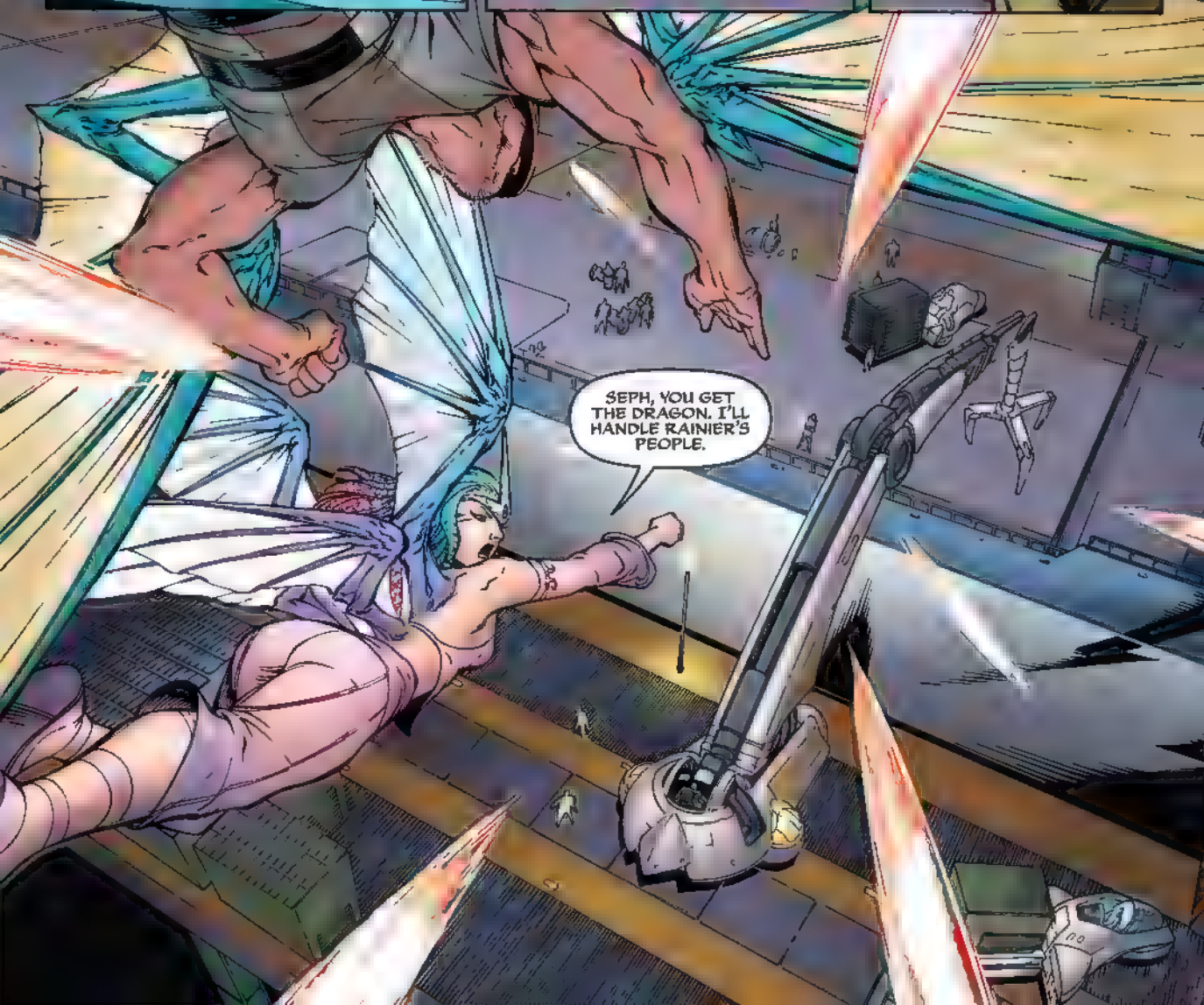
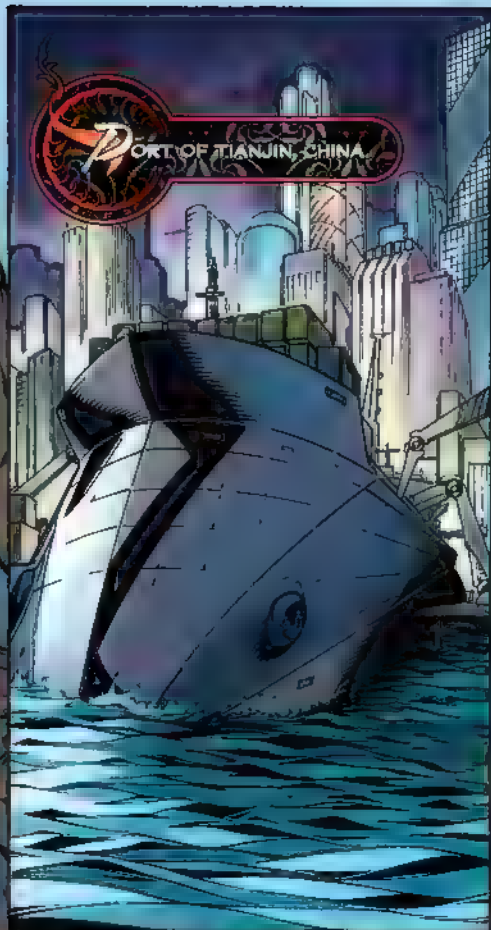
GOTCHA,
FIREFLY!

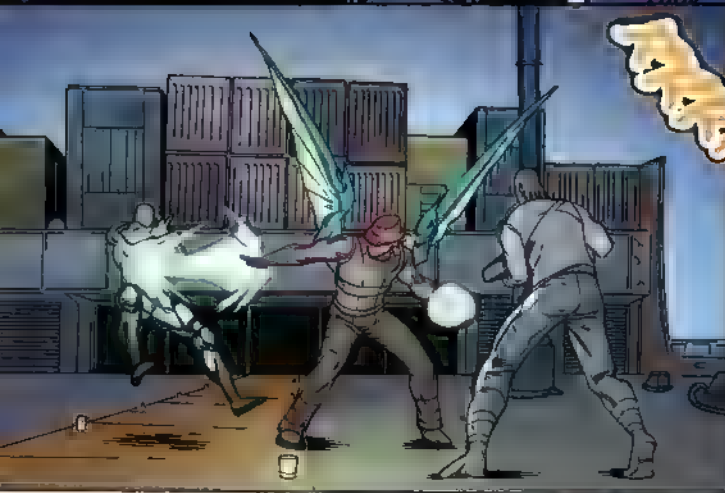
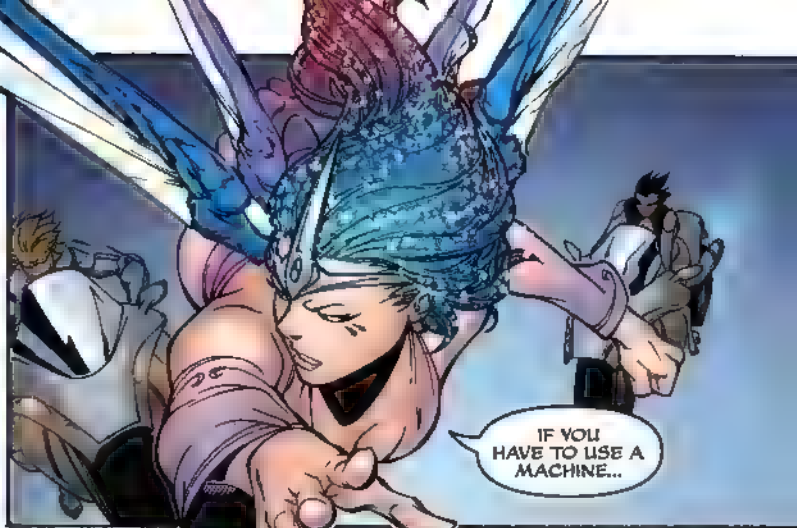
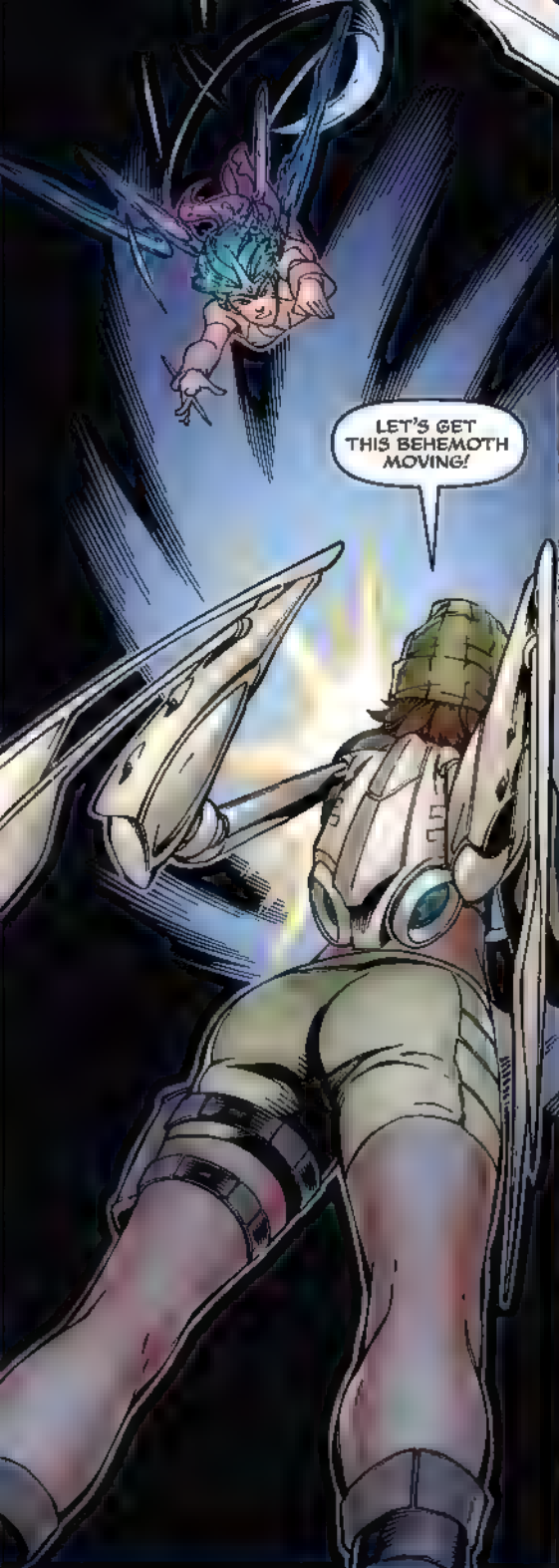
OH, SHI--

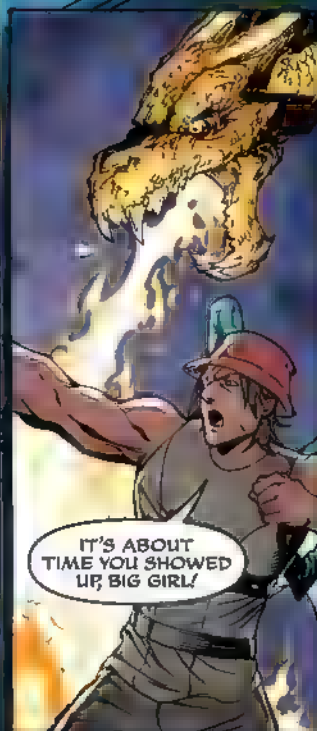


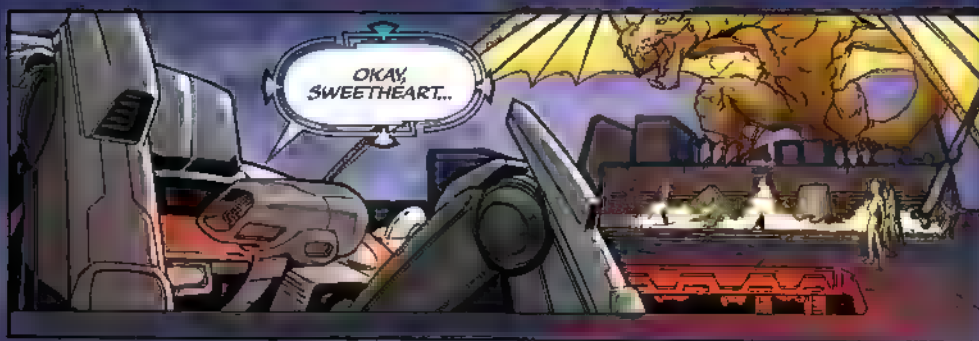


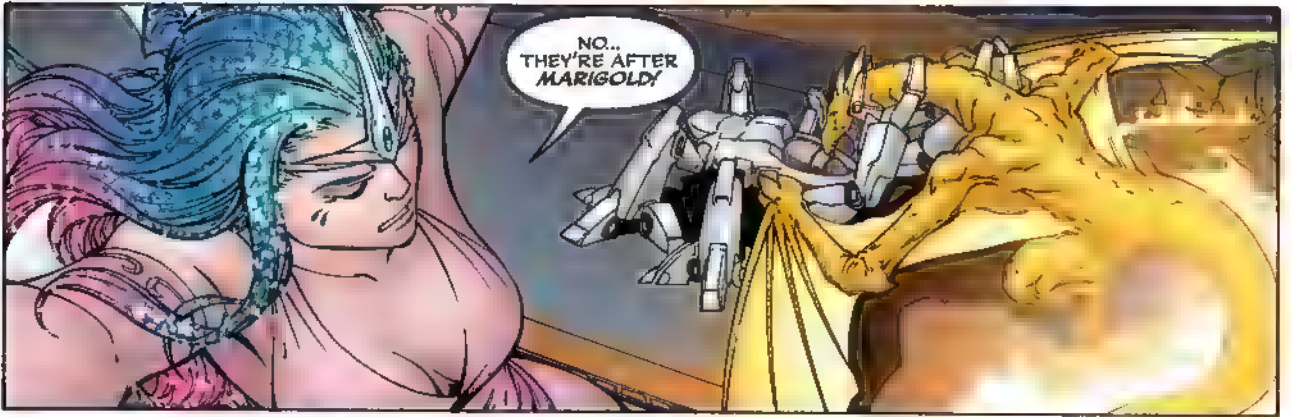


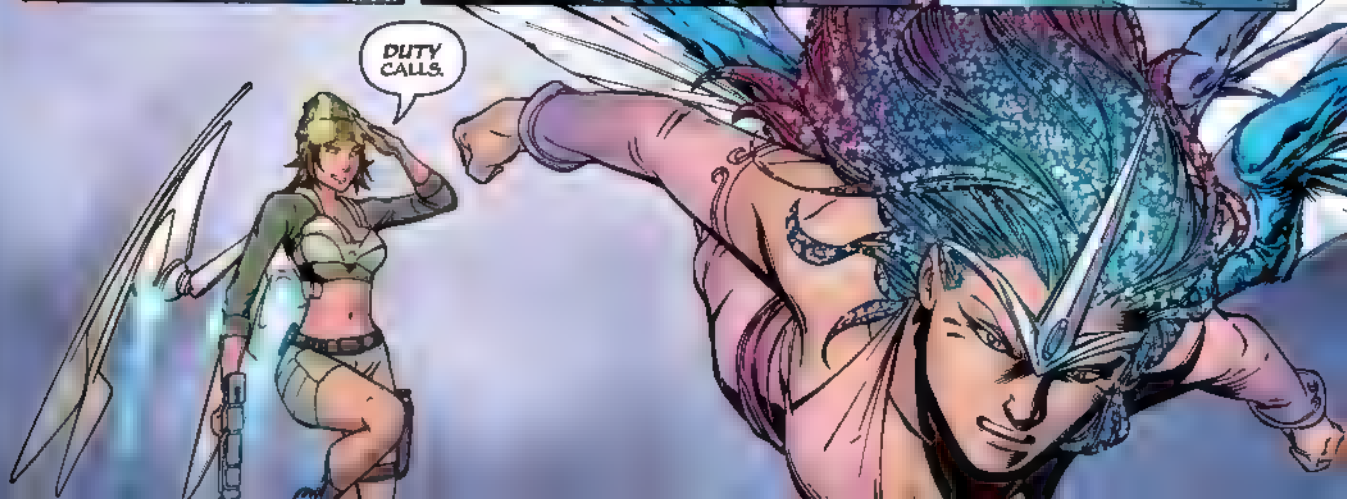
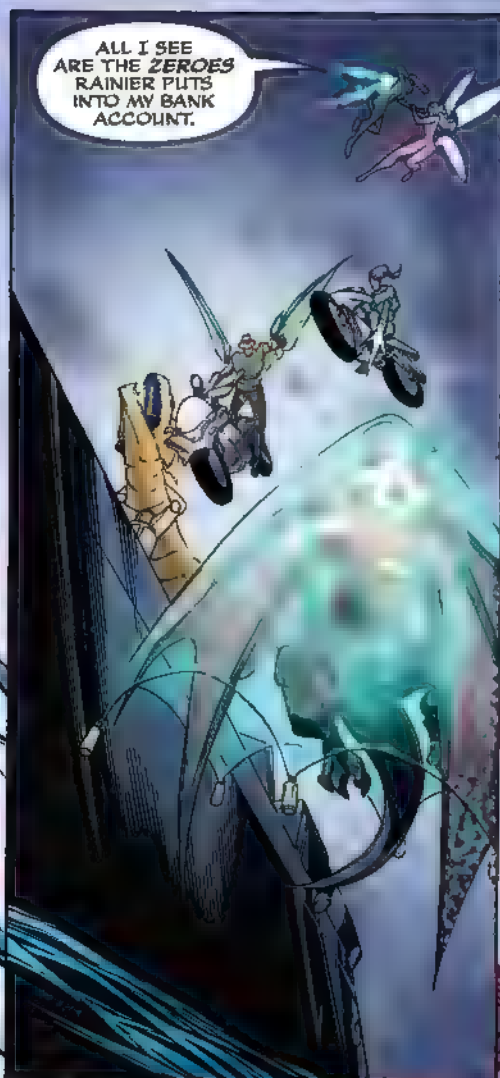
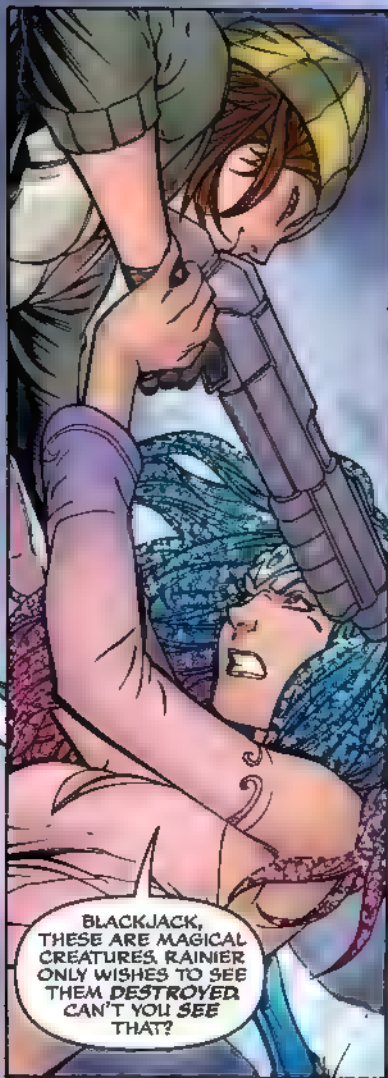
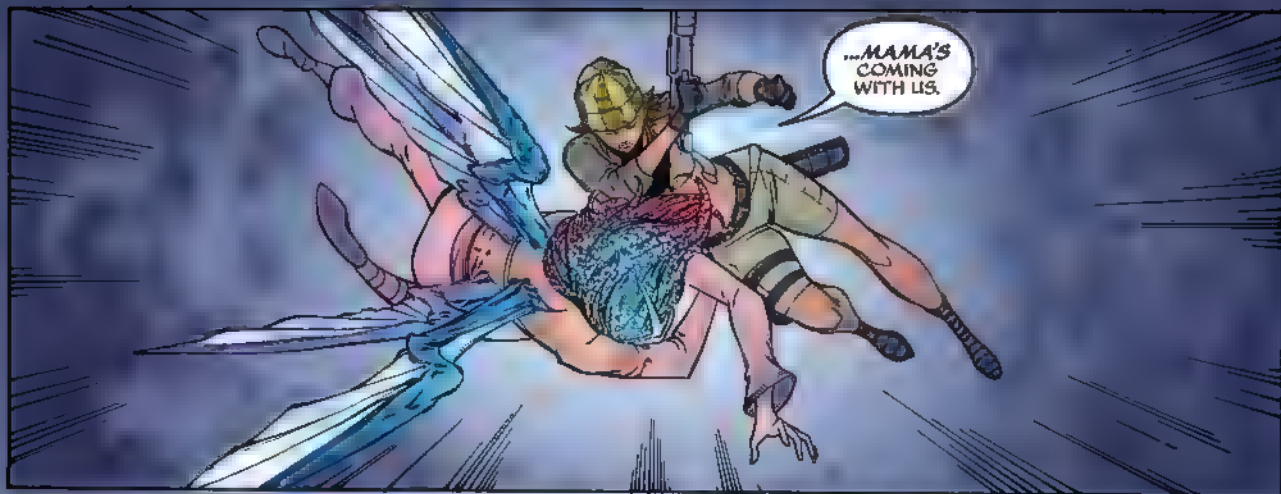


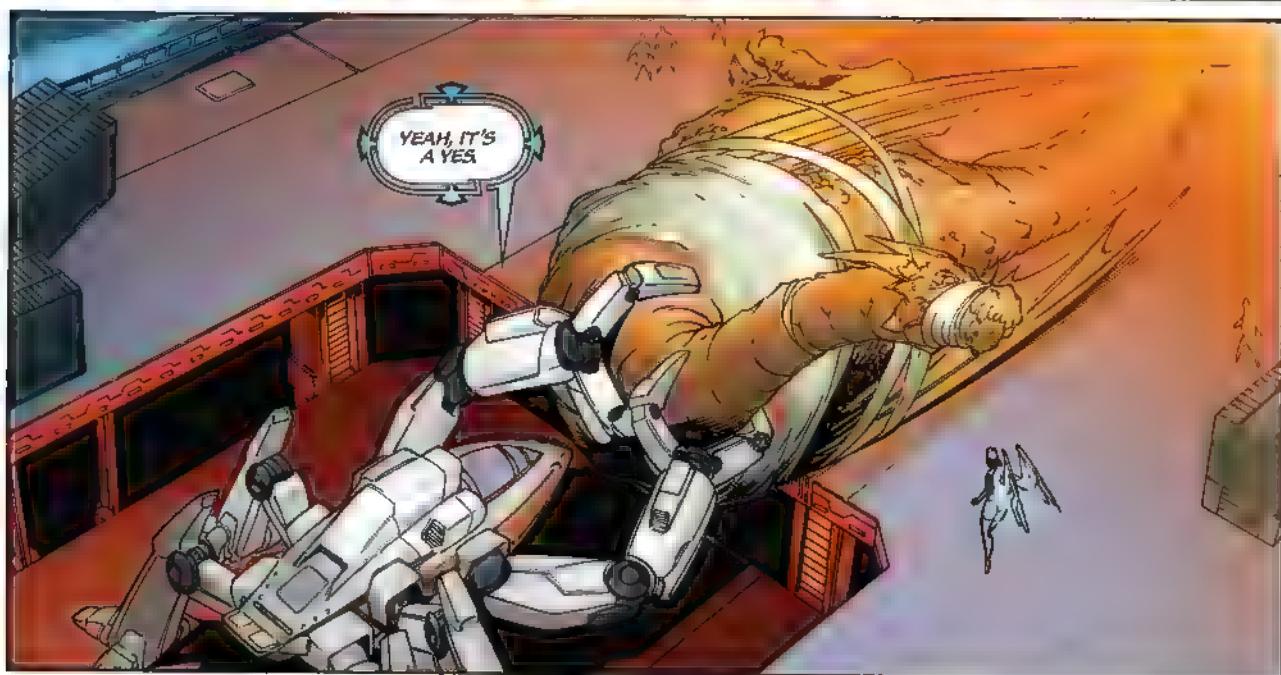


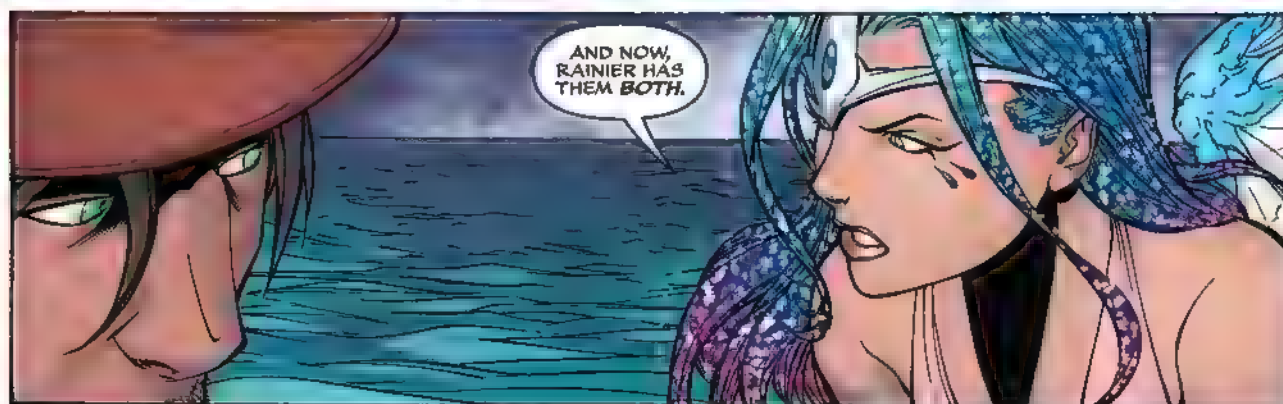
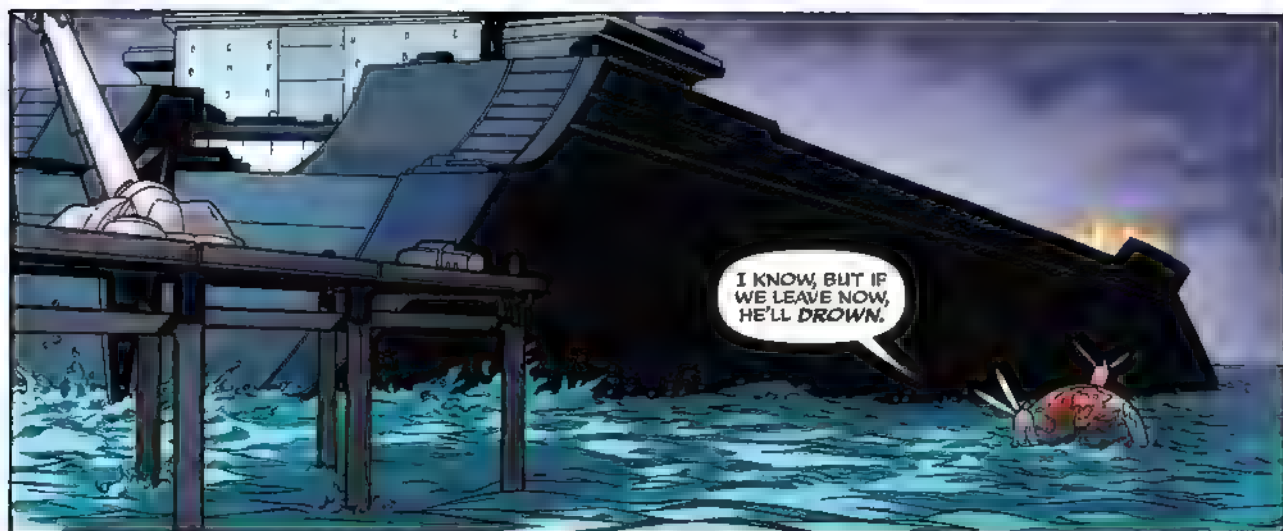


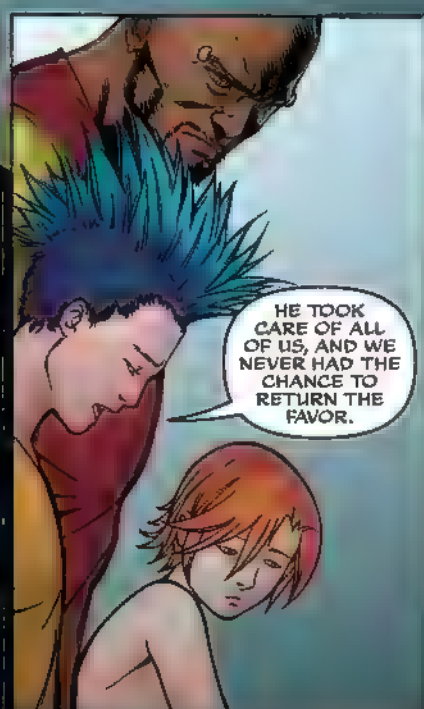
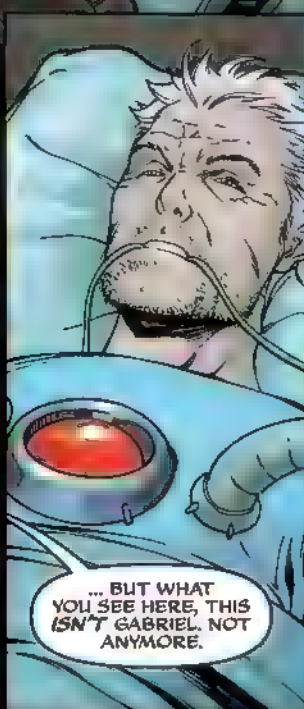
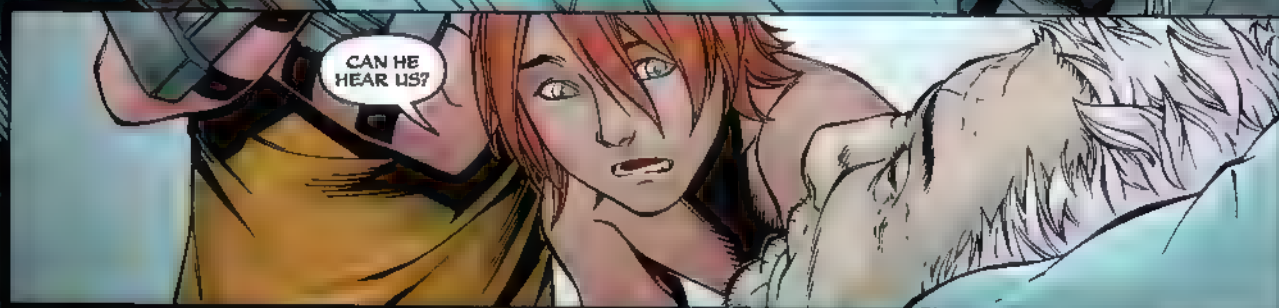


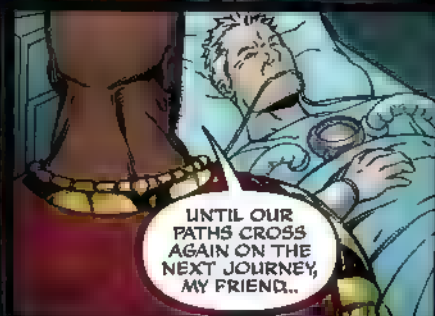


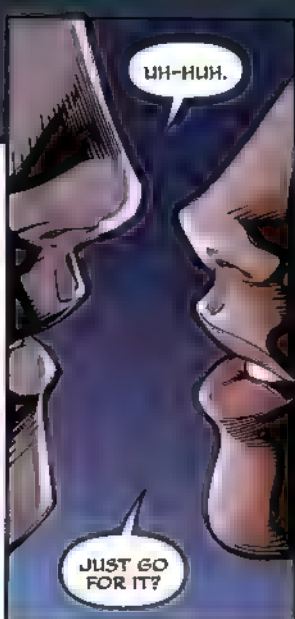
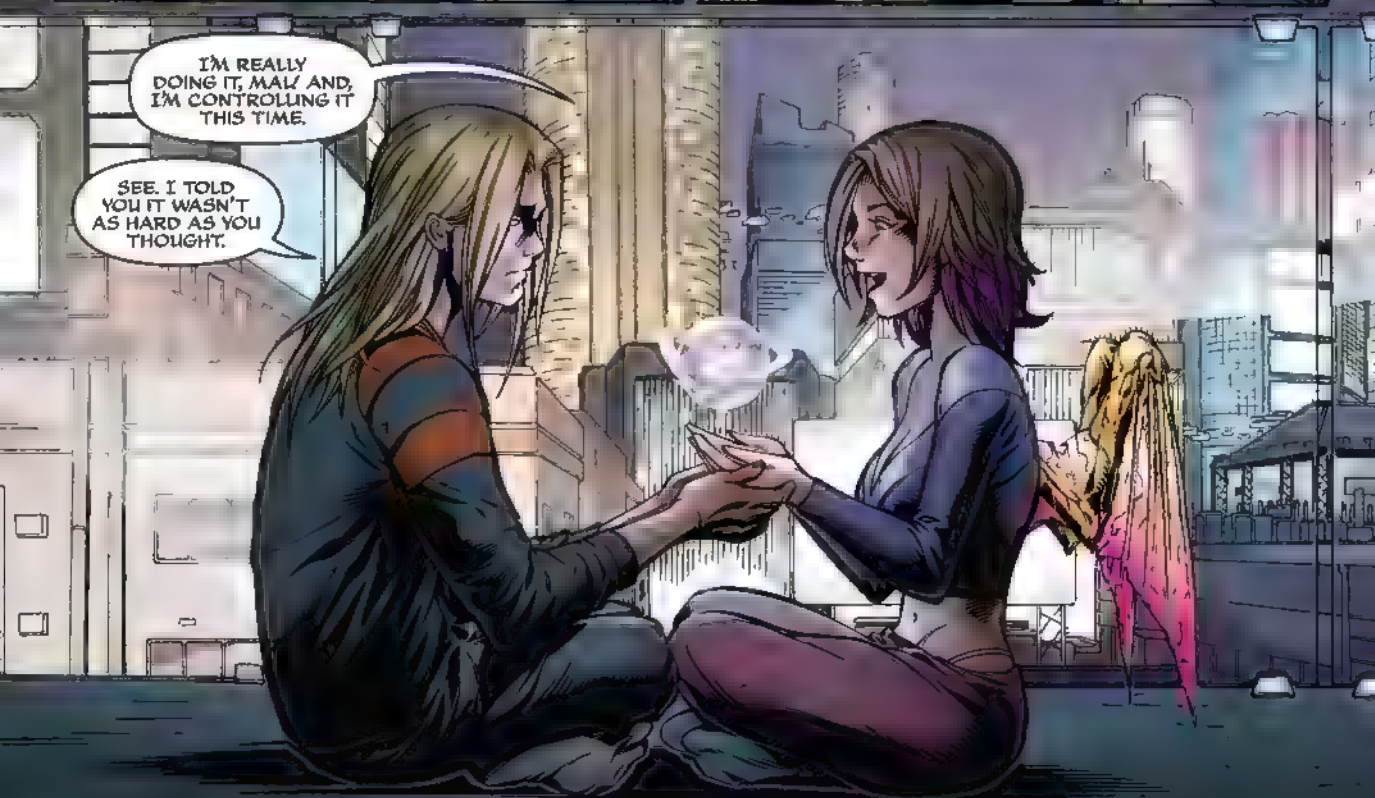














TO BE
CONTINUED
IN **SOULFIRE** #5
Vol. 2



VOL. 2

#5

OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



SOTELO



VOL. 2

#5

OF 9
COVER B

SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE FIVE OF NINE

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NO CREATURE
EXISTS ALONE.

WE ARE ALL PART OF THE SAME
WORLD, AND ONE CANNOT
IGNORE THE ROLES OTHERS
WOULD HAVE THEM PLAY.

BE IT
PROTECTOR...

HUNTER...

FOR DESTROYER.





IN THE CAVES
OF TINOC RYL,
I LEARNED OF
MY ANCESTRY.



THOSE WHO CHRONICLED
THEIR DEEDS NO DOUBT SAW
THEM AS MONSTERS,
AS DEMONS.



BUT I SAW
MYSELF, MY PAST,
MY HERITAGE.



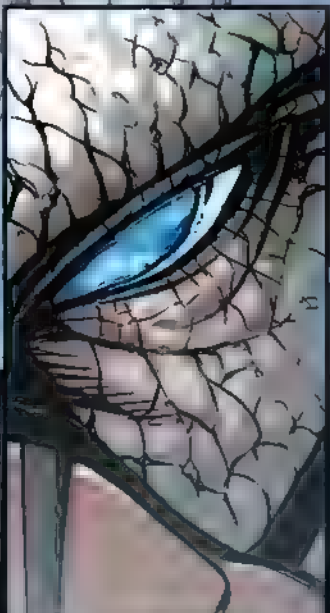
I SAW THE
TRUTH.

THEY WERE NOT
MONSTERS. THEY
WERE SURVIVORS.

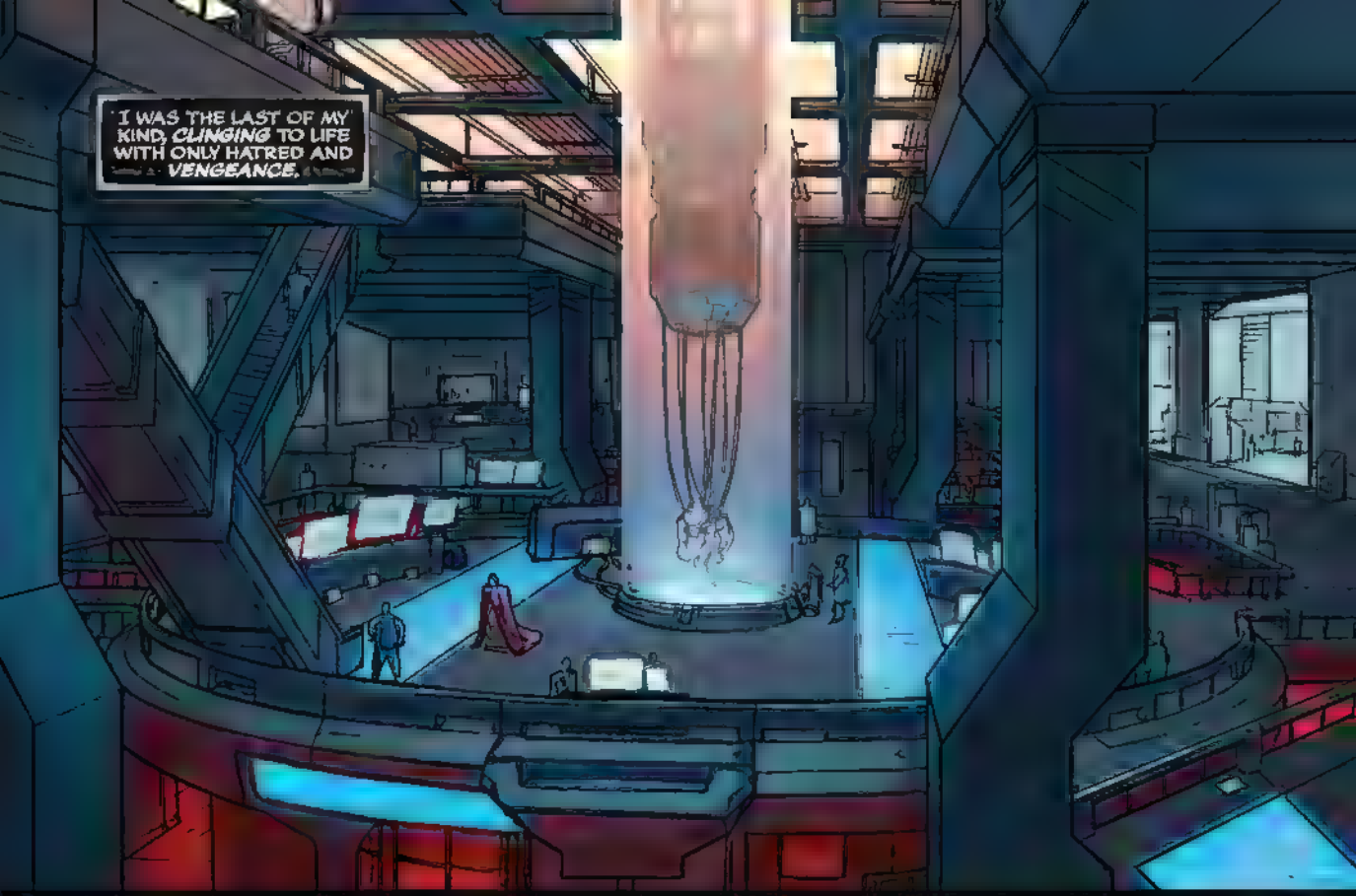


JUST LIKE
ME.

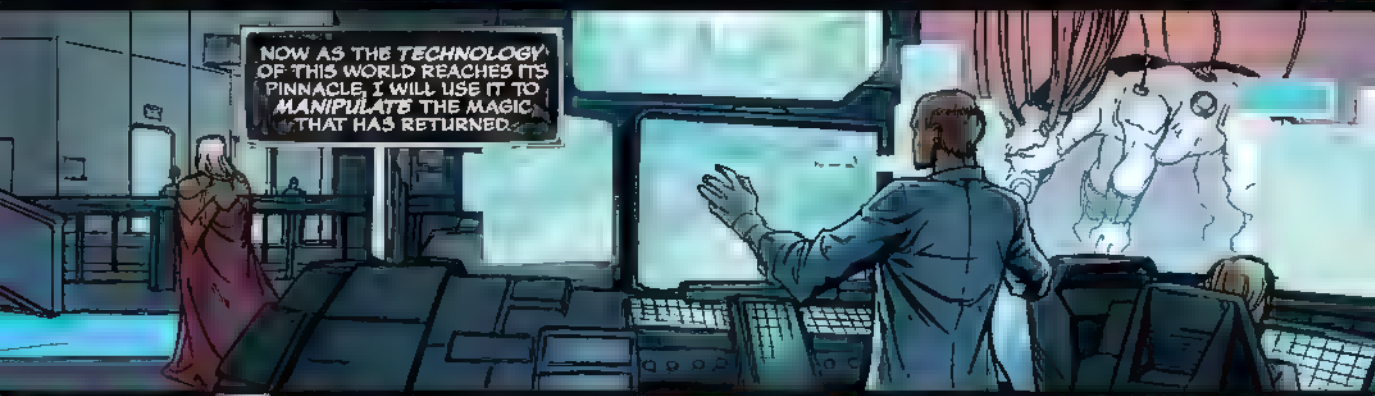
INITIALLY, I VIEWED THE
DRAGONS AS MERE WEAPONS
TO BE HARNESSSED— A
MANIFESTATION OF MAGIC THAT
HAD TO BE CONTROLLED.



BUT NOW, I KNOW
THE TRUE PURPOSE. I
UNDERSTAND WHY I
HAD TO ENDURE ALL
THIS TIME IN THE
DARKNESS ALONE.



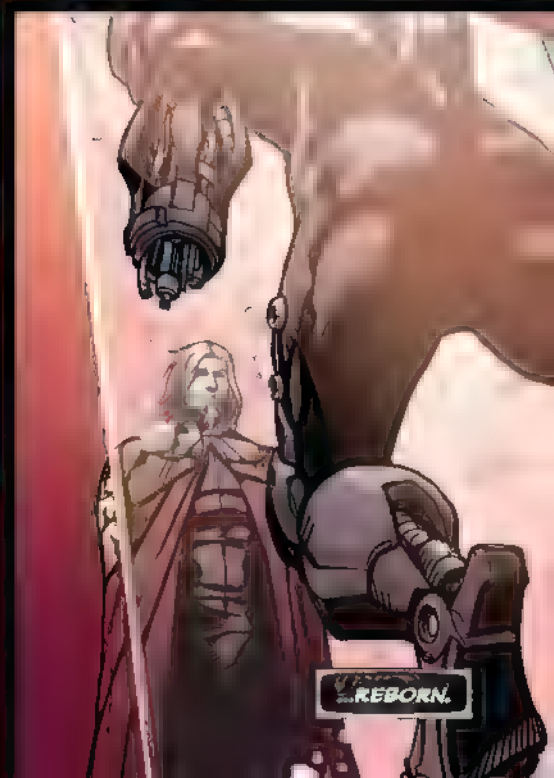
I WAS THE LAST OF MY
KIND, CLINGING TO LIFE
WITH ONLY HATRED AND
VENGEANCE.



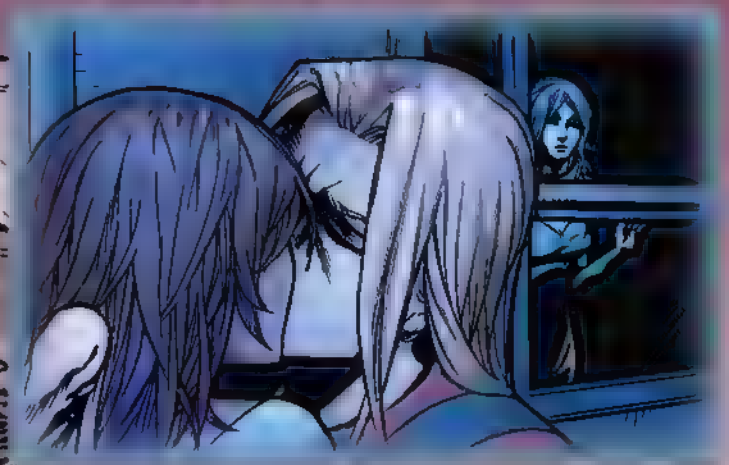
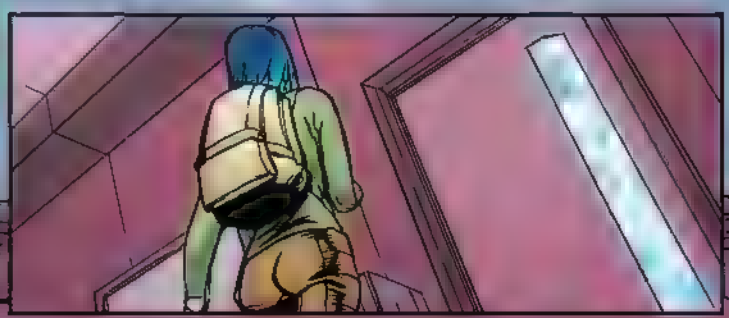
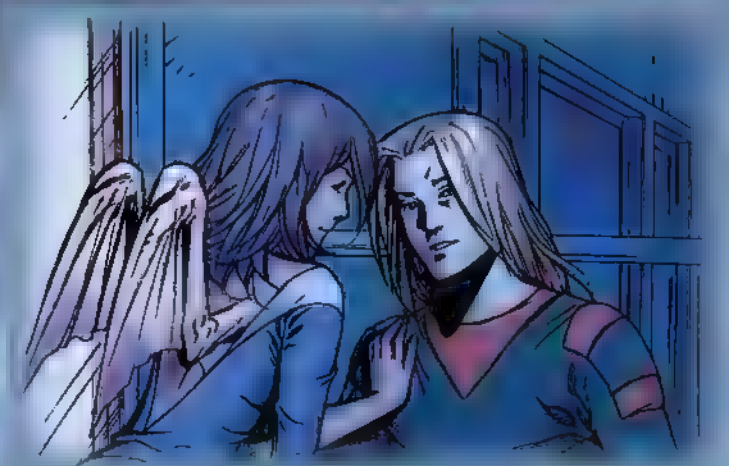
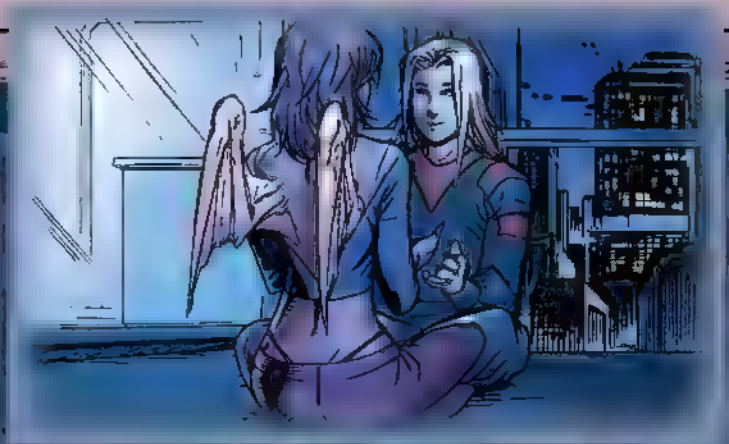
NOW AS THE TECHNOLOGY
OF THIS WORLD REACHES ITS
PINNACLE, I WILL USE IT TO
MANIPULATE THE MAGIC
THAT HAS RETURNED.

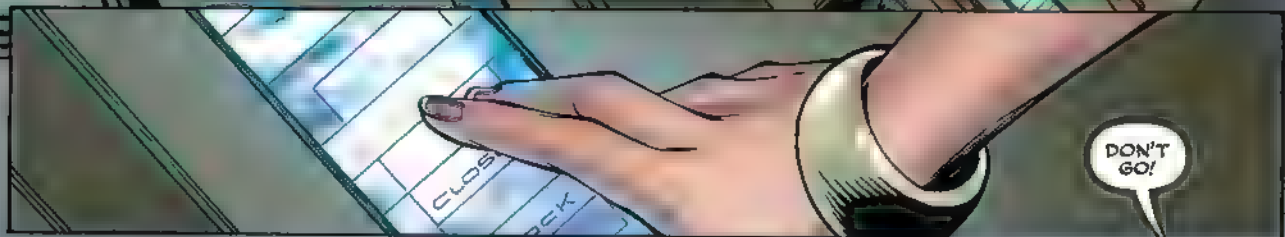
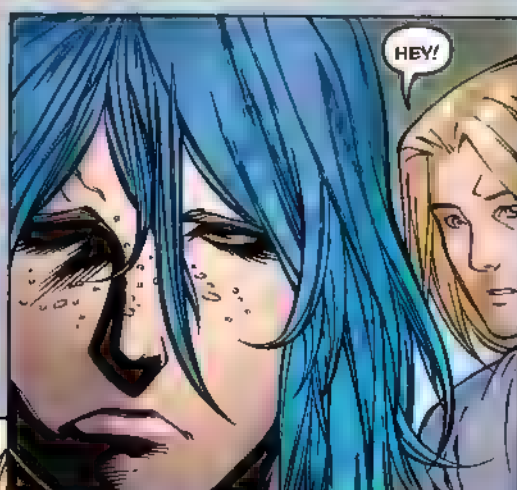
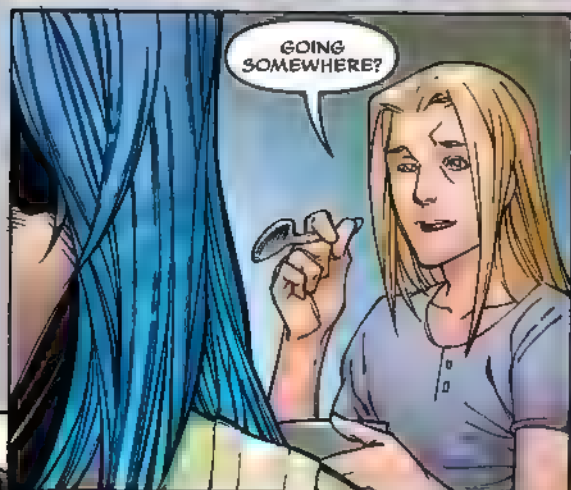


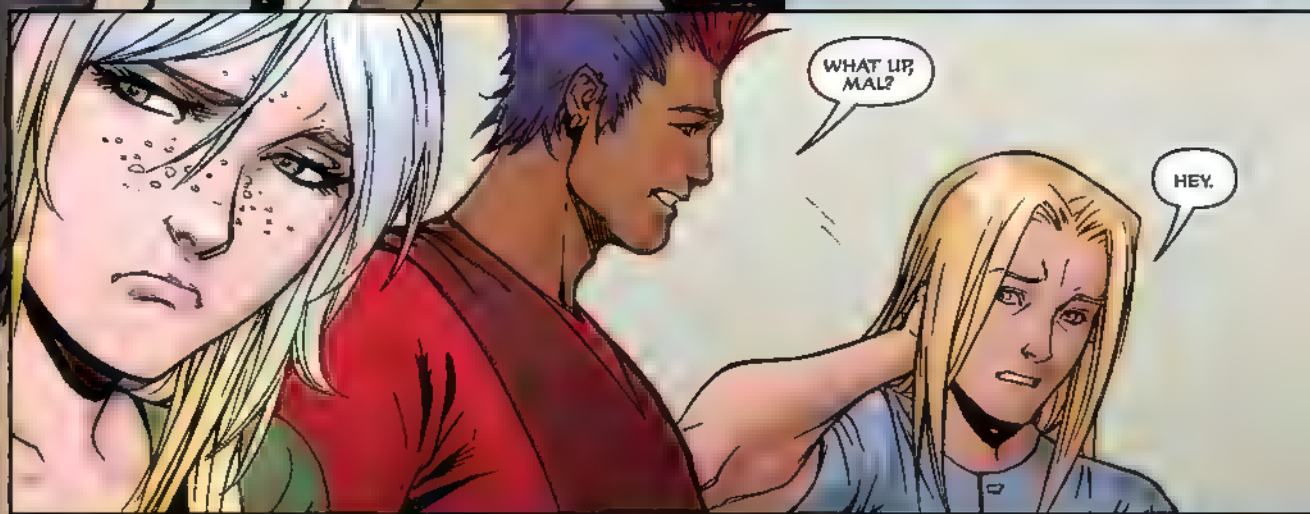
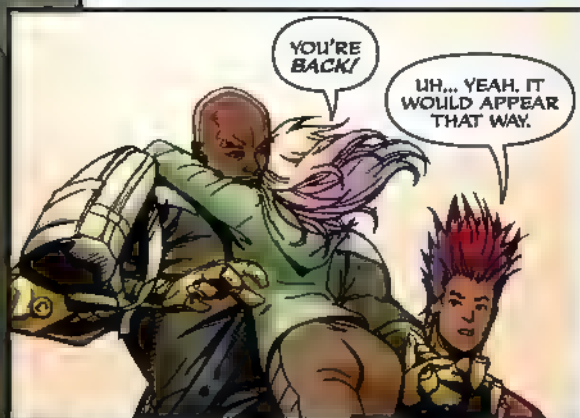
MY WORLD— THE WORLD
OF MY ANCESTORS—
WILL BE MADE ANEW.

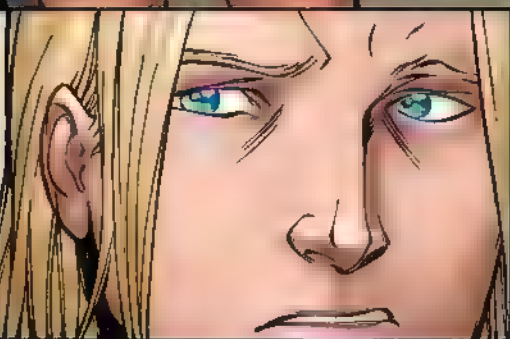
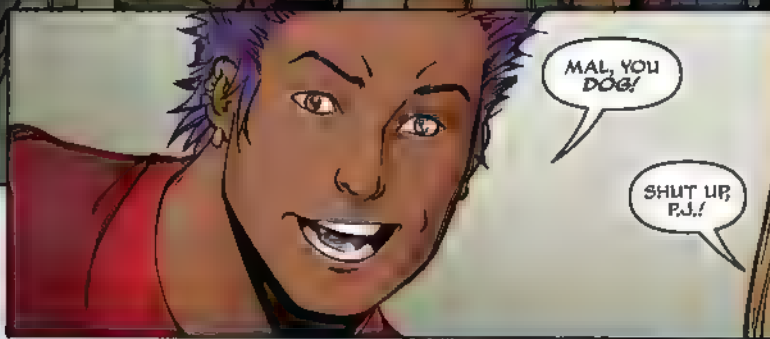
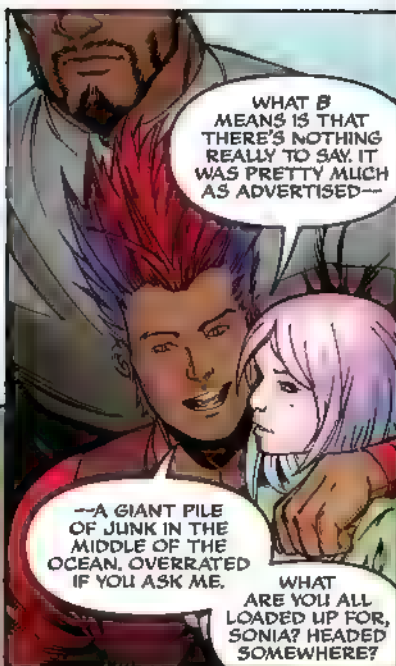


REBORN.







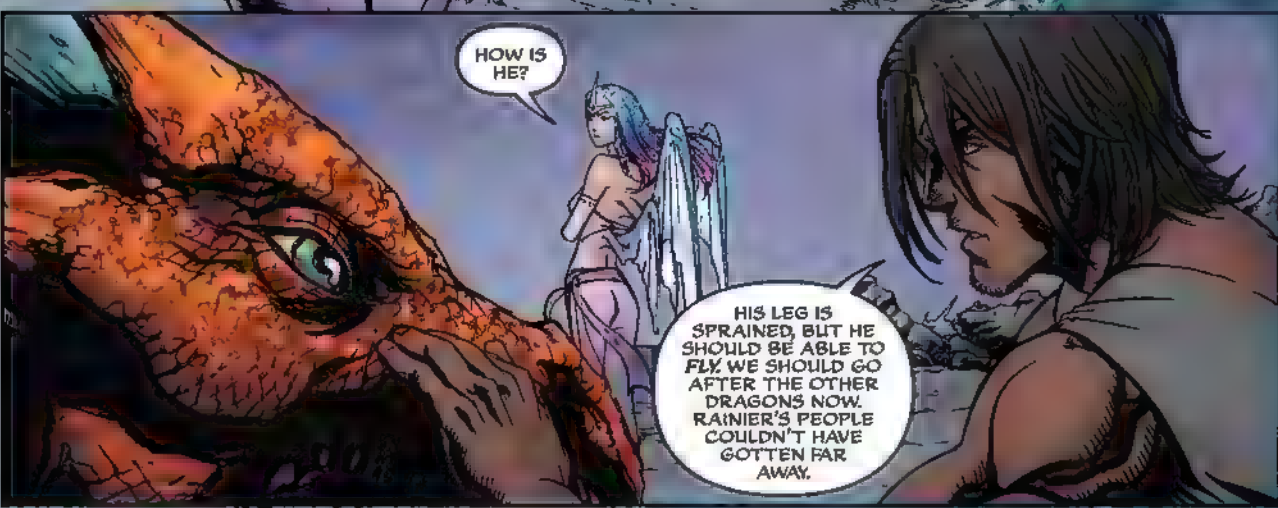




ALWAYS DREAMT THAT THE RETURN OF MAGIC WOULD BE A JOYOUS TIME CELEBRATED ACROSS THE WORLD.

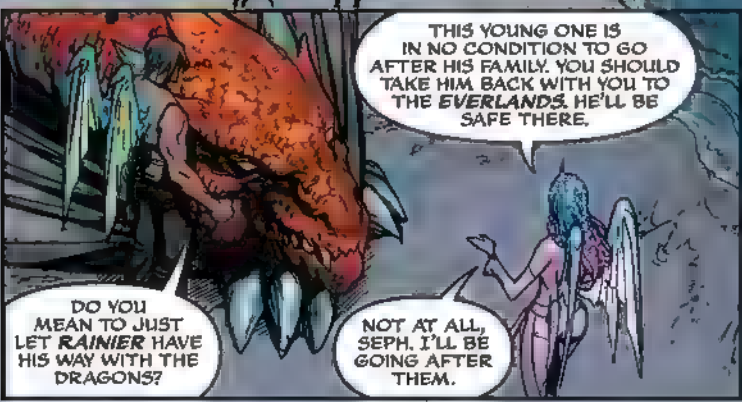
BUT FOR NOW, OUR STRUGGLE CONTINUES AS MAGIC HIDES FROM A WORLD UNPREPARED FOR THE TRUTH.

AND RAINIER IS STILL DRIVEN IN HIS QUEST TO DOMINATE—TO GAIN CONTROL OVER THE MOST POWERFUL ELEMENT OF MAGIC... THE DRAGONS.



HOW IS HE?

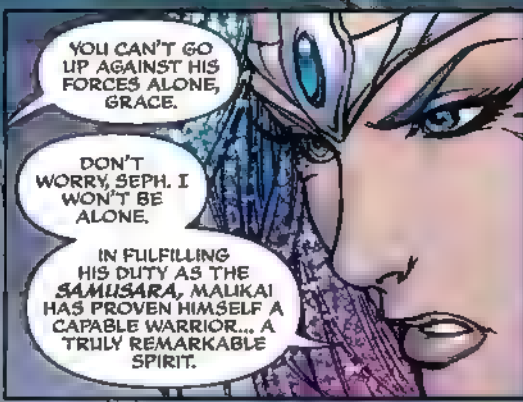
HIS LEG IS SPRAINED, BUT HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FLY. WE SHOULD GO AFTER THE OTHER DRAGONS NOW. RAINIER'S PEOPLE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR AWAY.



THIS YOUNG ONE IS IN NO CONDITION TO GO AFTER HIS FAMILY. YOU SHOULD TAKE HIM BACK WITH YOU TO THE EVERLANDS. HE'LL BE SAFE THERE.

DO YOU MEAN TO JUST LET RAINIER HAVE HIS WAY WITH THE DRAGONS?

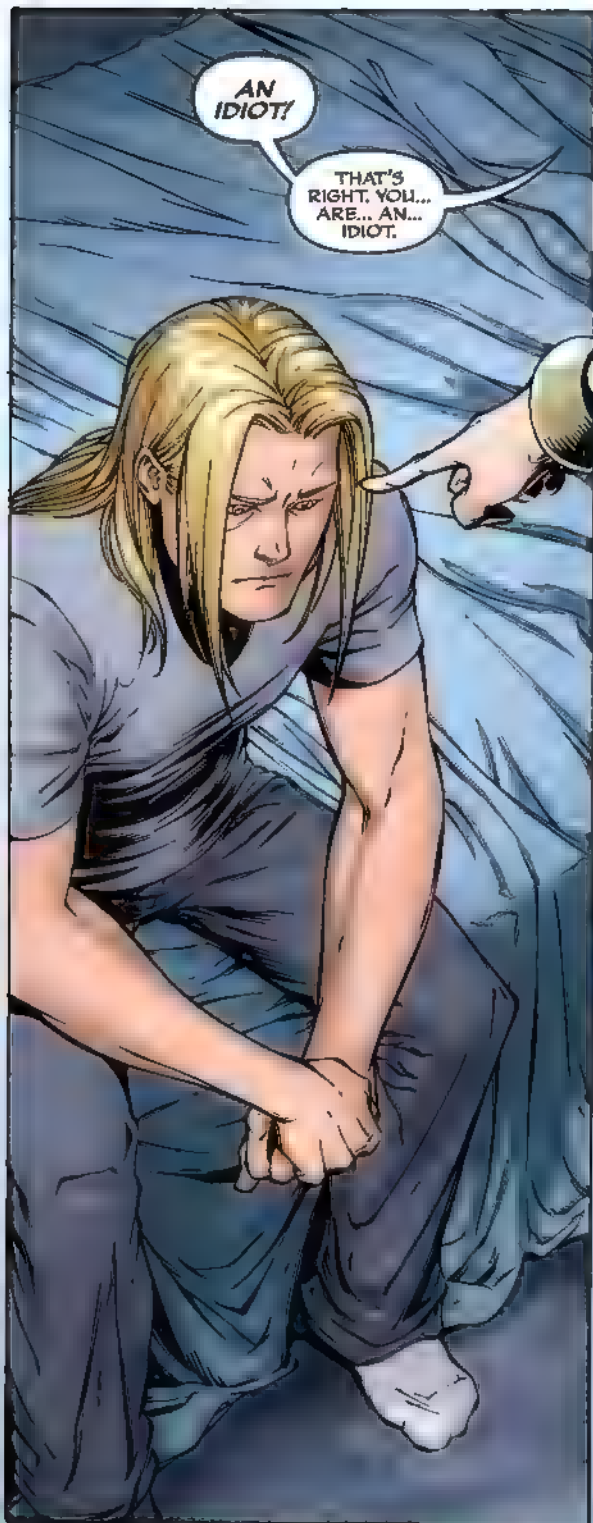
NOT AT ALL, SEPH. I'LL BE GOING AFTER THEM.



YOU CAN'T GO UP AGAINST HIS FORCES ALONE, GRACE.

DON'T WORRY, SEPH. I WON'T BE ALONE.

IN FULFILLING HIS DUTY AS THE SAMUSARA, MALIKAI HAS PROVEN HIMSELF A CAPABLE WARRIOR... A TRULY REMARKABLE SPIRIT.



AN IDIOT!

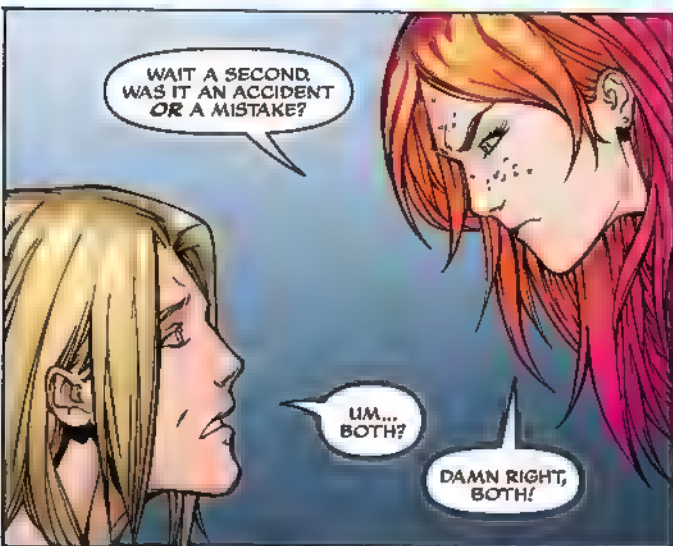
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU... ARE... AN... IDIOT.



YOU KNOW, WHILE I'M TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED, IT WOULD HELP IF YOU STOPPED CALLING ME THAT.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT WAS AN ACCIDENT? A MISTAKE.

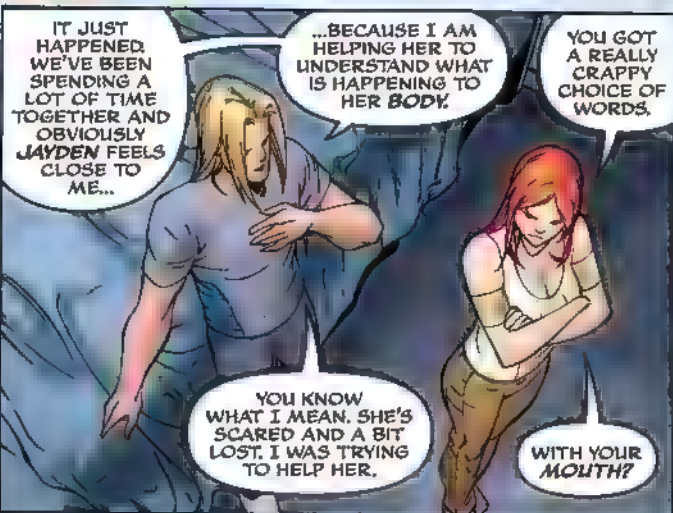
I'LL STOP CALLING YOU AN IDIOT, WHEN YOU STOP BEING STUPID.



WAIT A SECOND, WAS IT AN ACCIDENT OR A MISTAKE?

UM... BOTH?

DAMN RIGHT, BOTH!



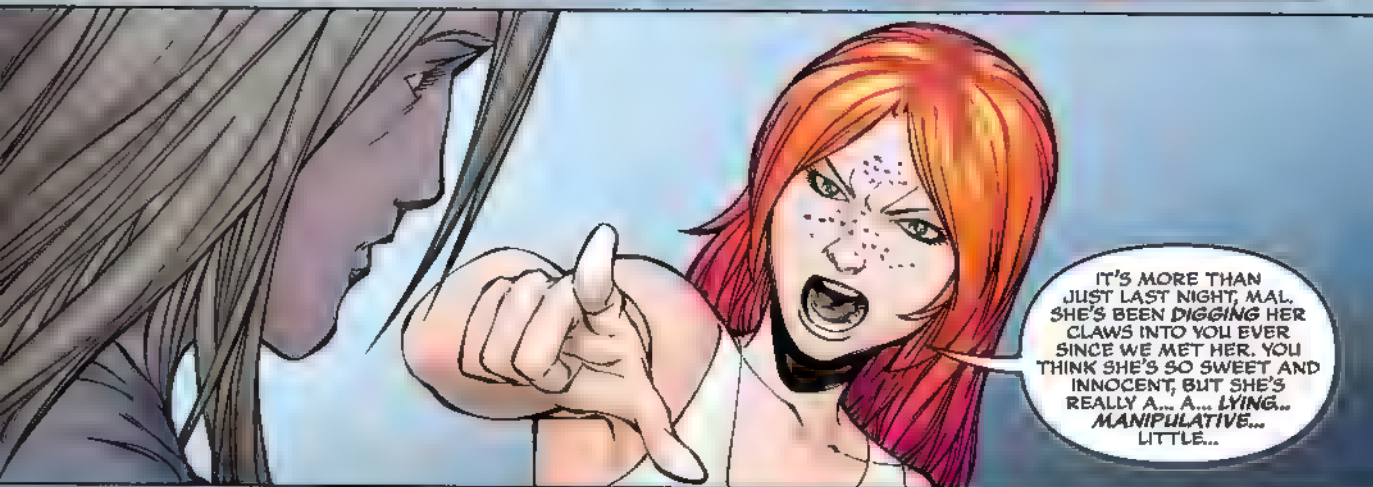
IT JUST HAPPENED. WE'VE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER AND OBVIOUSLY JAYDEN FEELS CLOSE TO ME...

...BECAUSE I AM HELPING HER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING TO HER BODY.

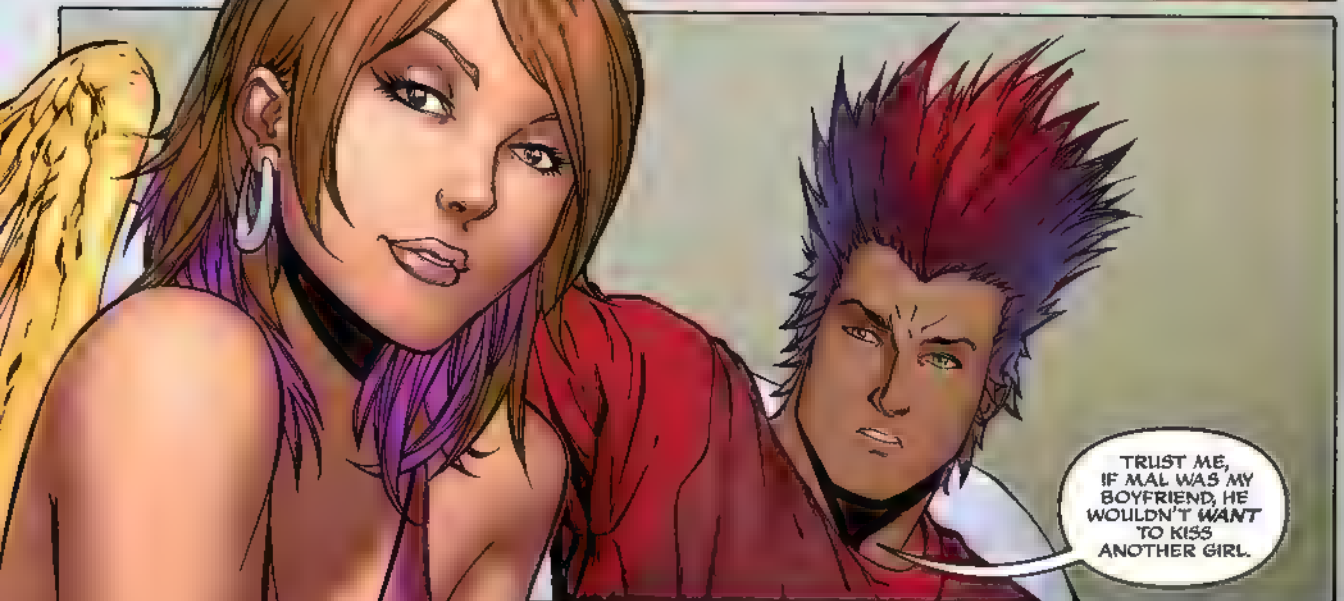
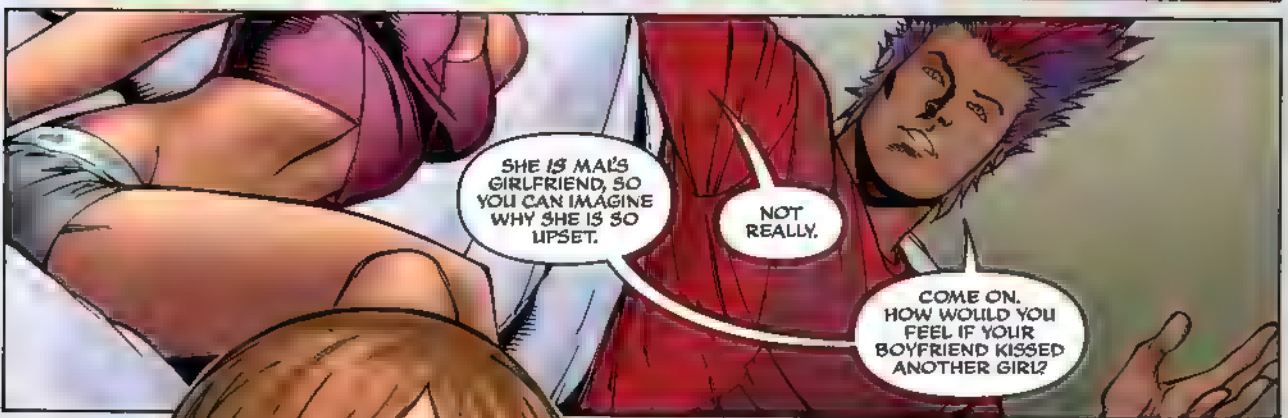
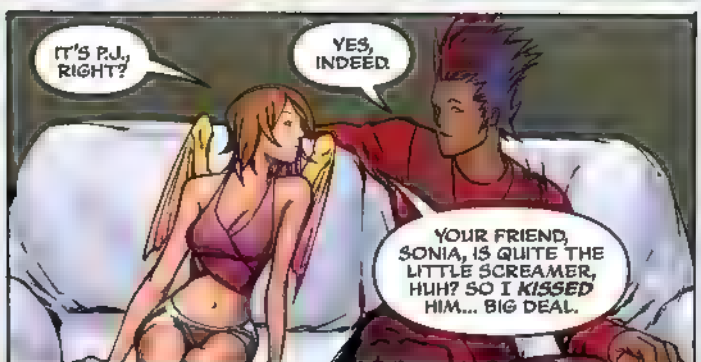
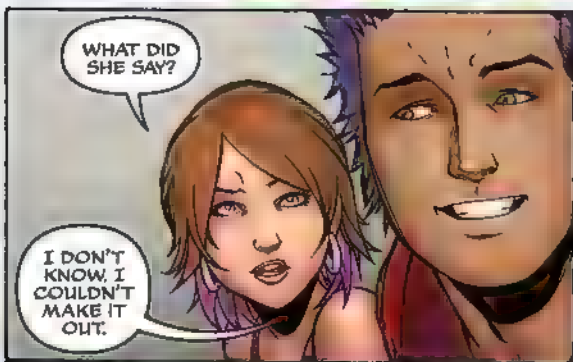
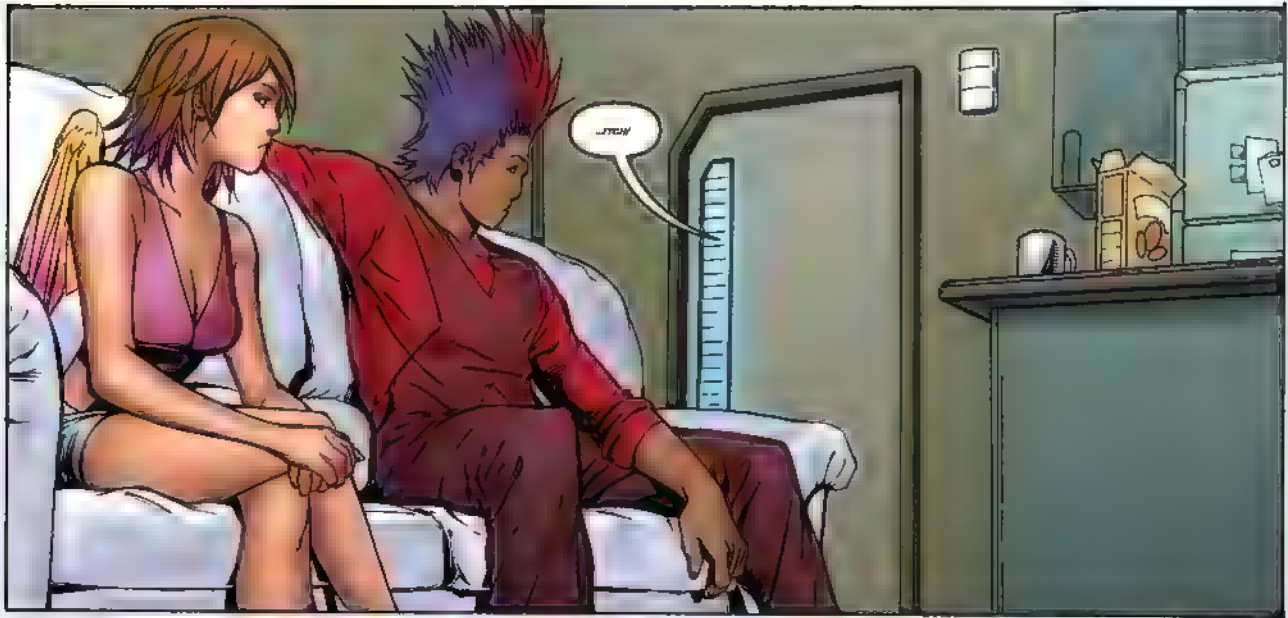
YOU GOT A REALLY CRAPPY CHOICE OF WORDS.

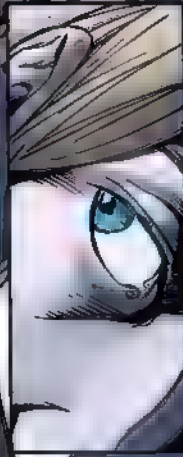
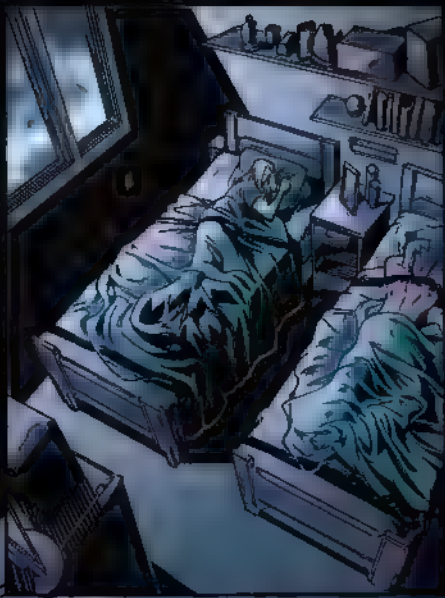
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. SHE'S SCARED AND A BIT LOST. I WAS TRYING TO HELP HER.

WITH YOUR MOUTH?



IT'S MORE THAN JUST LAST NIGHT, MAL. SHE'S BEEN DIGGING HER CLAWS INTO YOU EVER SINCE WE MET HER. YOU THINK SHE'S SO SWEET AND INNOCENT, BUT SHE'S REALLY A... A... LYING... MANIPULATIVE... LITTLE...





GRACE??

YOU SCARED
THE HELL OUT
OF ME!

WE NEED
TO TALK.



RAINIER HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF HIS ENTIRE REGION AND HAS BEGUN CAPTURING DRAGONS. HE **MUST** BE STOPPED.

BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, MALIKAI, THAT **CHALLENGING** RAINIER WILL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THIS TIME.

AS THE **SAMUSARA**, YOU WERE THE FOCAL POINT FOR MAGIC'S RETURN. WHEN YOU DEFEATED RAINIER IN THE EVERLANDS, YOU WERE AT THE VERY **HEIGHT** OF YOUR POWER.

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

YOU'RE NOT AS POWERFUL AS YOU WERE, MALIKAI.

AND NOW, RAINIER WILL BE MORE POWERFUL THAN BEFORE. IN GIVING MAGIC BACK TO THE **WORLD**, YOU HAVE GIVEN IT TO **HIM** AS WELL.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, MAYBE YOU WON'T TRY TO DO IT ALL **ALONE** THIS TIME.

I CAN'T ASK YOU GUYS TO BE PART OF THIS.

THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT, MAL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO ASK.

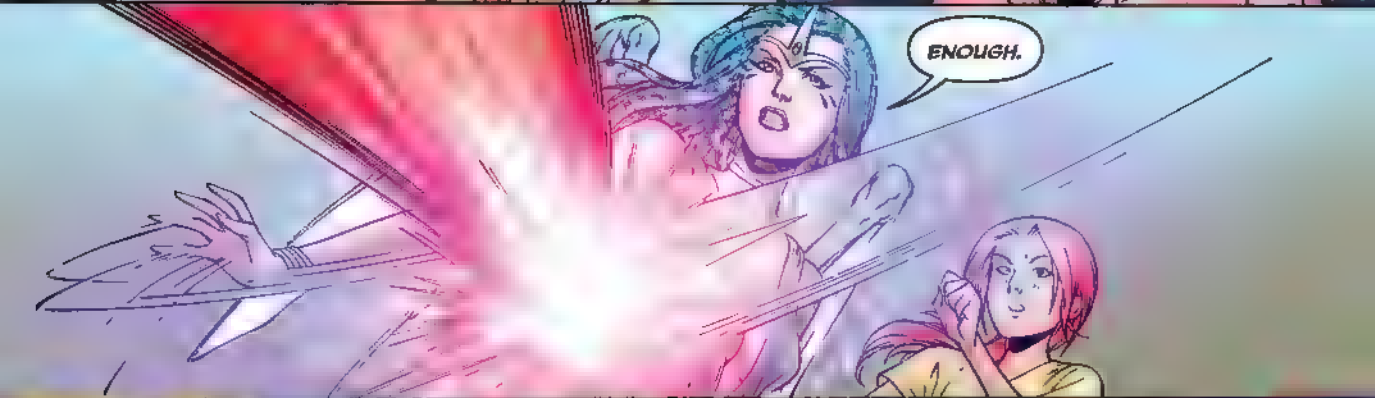
BESIDES, IT ISN'T ALL ABOUT YOU, KID. RAINIER OWES ME **PLENTY**— AND HE'S GOING TO **PAY**... WITH INTEREST.

WHAT ABOUT **ME**, MAL? YOU'RE NOT JUST GOING TO **DITCH** ME, ARE YOU?

JAYDEN, THIS ISN'T SOME ROAD TRIP WE'RE TAKING. RAINIER IS **BAD NEWS**.

YEAH— SO WHILE MALIKAI'S **FRIENDS** HELP HIM, WHY DON'T **YOU** JUST HOUSESIT OR BETTER YET... FIND YOUR **OWN PLACE**!

YOU KEEP SAYING I DON'T BELONG, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WITHOUT ANY MAGIC. IF THINGS GET MESSY, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO???



I THOUGHT
WE WERE GOING TO
SAN FRANCISCO.

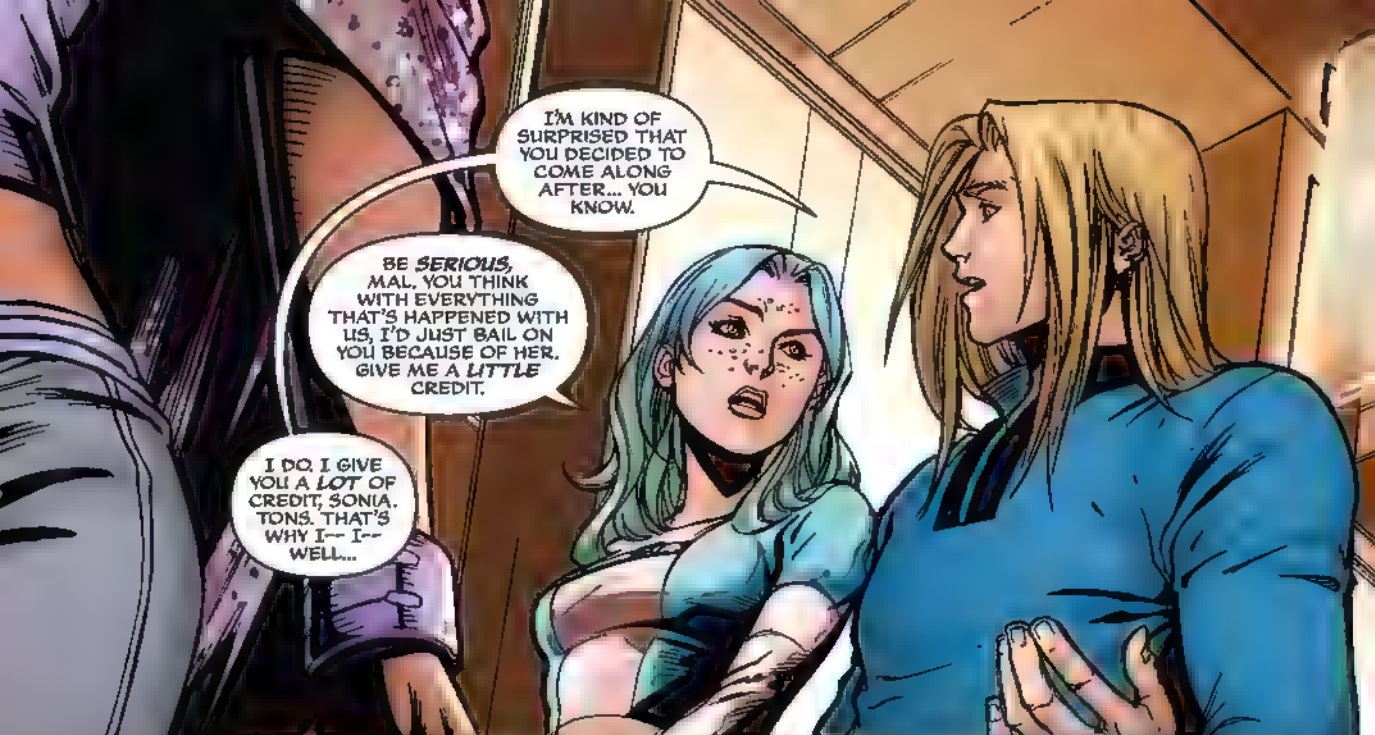


WE ARE, BUT
I THOUGHT WE
COULD USE A BIT
MORE HELP.

HELP? FROM
WHO?

AN OLD
FRIEND

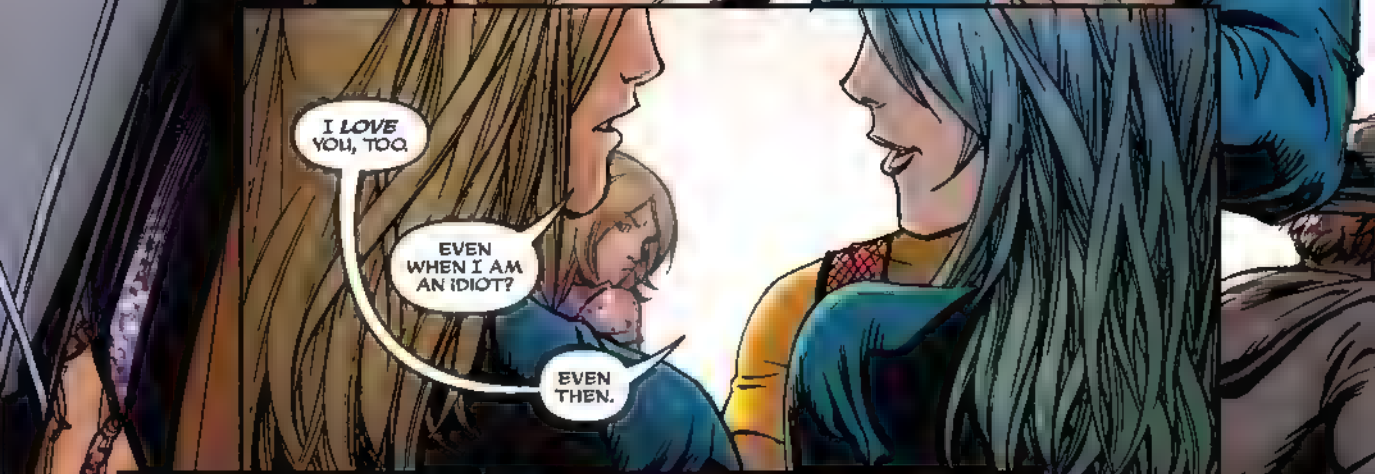
Plaza Mon



I'M KIND OF SURPRISED THAT YOU DECIDED TO COME ALONG AFTER... YOU KNOW.

BE **SERIOUS**, MAL. YOU THINK WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED WITH US, I'D JUST BAIL ON YOU BECAUSE OF HER. GIVE ME A LITTLE CREDIT.

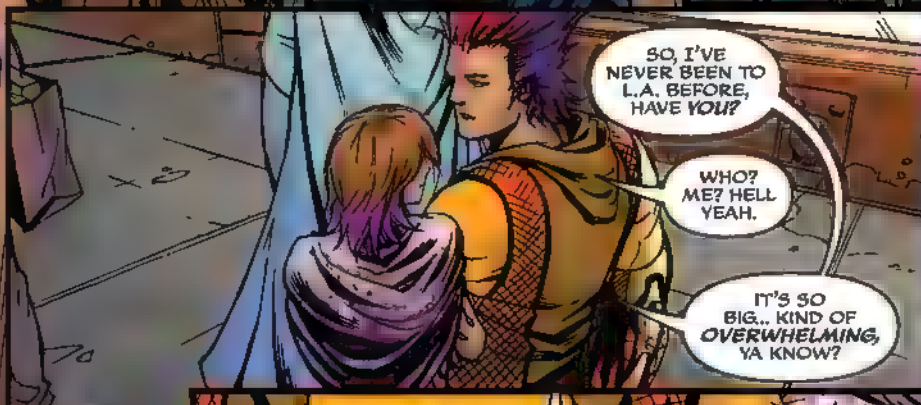
I DO. I GIVE YOU A LOT OF CREDIT, SONIA. TONS. THAT'S WHY I-- I-- WELL...



I LOVE YOU, TOO.

EVEN WHEN I AM AN IDIOT?

EVEN THEN.



SO, I'VE NEVER BEEN TO L.A. BEFORE, HAVE YOU?

WHO? ME? HELL YEAH.

IT'S SO BIG... KIND OF OVERWHELMING, YA KNOW?



IT'S A GREAT CITY. TRUST ME. THE POSSIBILITIES ARE **ENDLESS** IN A CITY LIKE L.A.

MAYBE, YOU'LL HAVE TO SHOW ME.



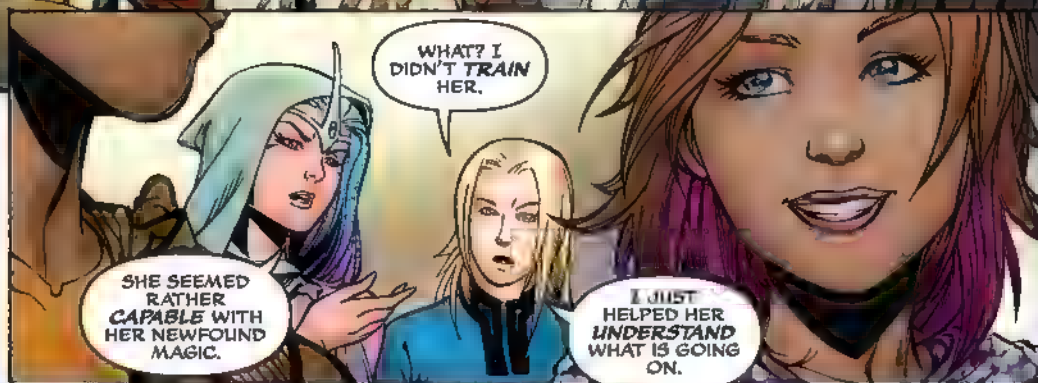
TELL ME, MALIKAI— WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEW FRIEND?

I KNOW JAYDEN IS LIKE US. SHE WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH A JERK OF A BOYFRIEND AND NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY, SO I OFFERED TO LET HER CRASH WITH US.

SONIA SEEMS TO DISLIKE HER.

YEAH, WELL, THAT WAS MY FAULT.

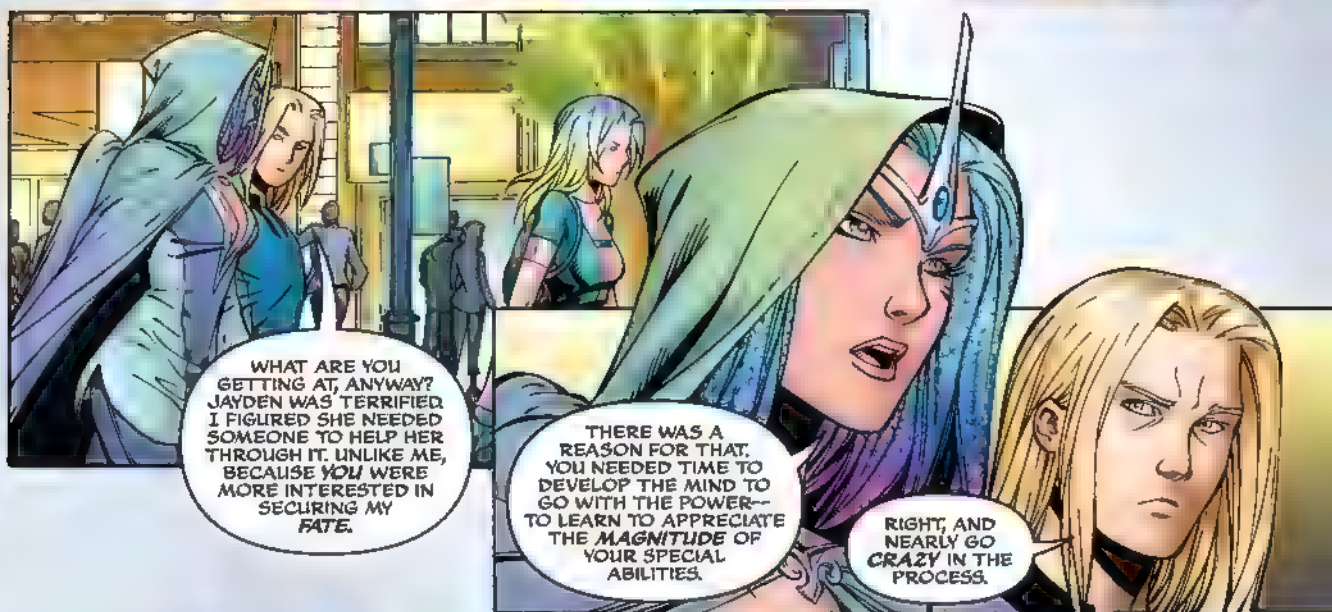
AND HER TRAINING? WAS THAT YOUR FAULT, TOO?



WHAT? I DIDN'T TRAIN HER.

SHE SEEMED RATHER CAPABLE WITH HER NEWFOUND MAGIC.

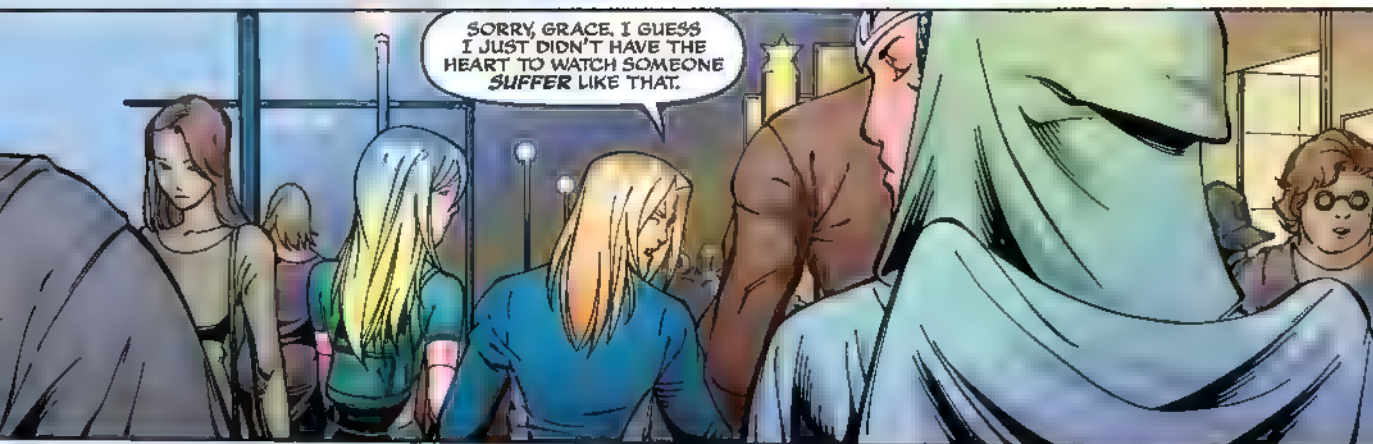
I JUST HELPED HER UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON.



WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT, ANYWAY? JAYDEN WAS TERRIFIED. I FIGURED SHE NEEDED SOMEONE TO HELP HER THROUGH IT. UNLIKE ME, BECAUSE YOU WERE MORE INTERESTED IN SECURING MY FATE.

THERE WAS A REASON FOR THAT. YOU NEEDED TIME TO DEVELOP THE MIND TO GO WITH THE POWER— TO LEARN TO APPRECIATE THE MAGNITUDE OF YOUR SPECIAL ABILITIES.

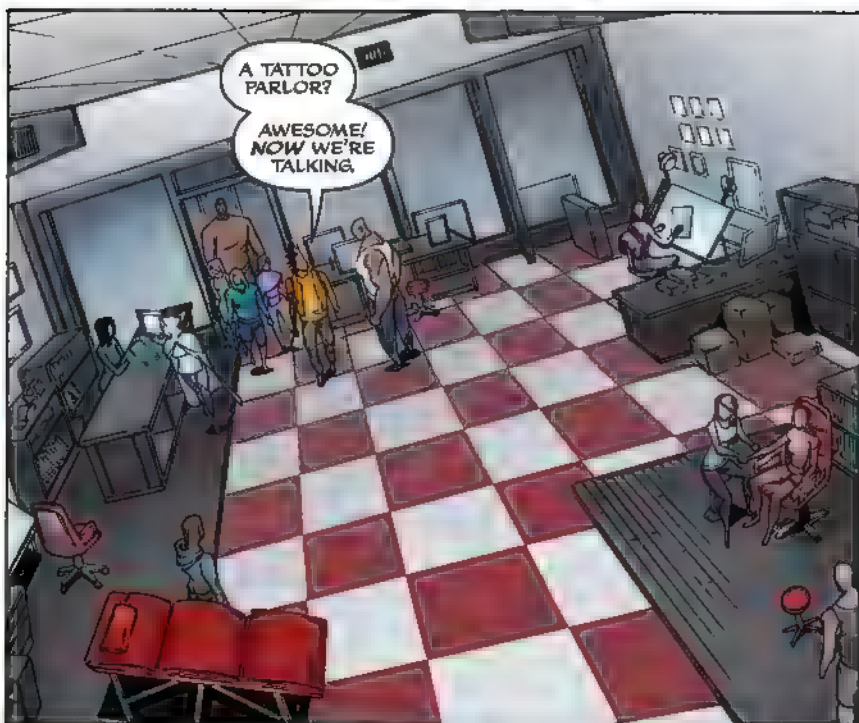
RIGHT, AND NEARLY GO CRAZY IN THE PROCESS.



SORRY, GRACE. I GUESS I JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO WATCH SOMEONE SUFFER LIKE THAT.



YOUR FRIEND'S IN HERE?

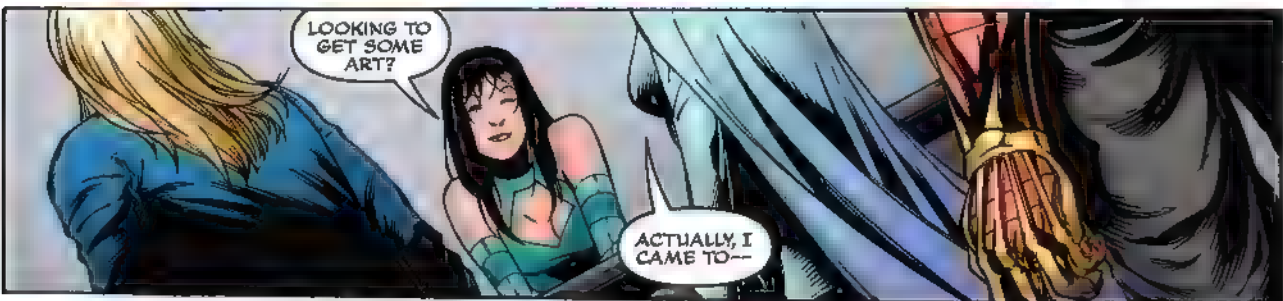


A TATTOO PARLOR?

AWESOME! NOW WE'RE TALKING.

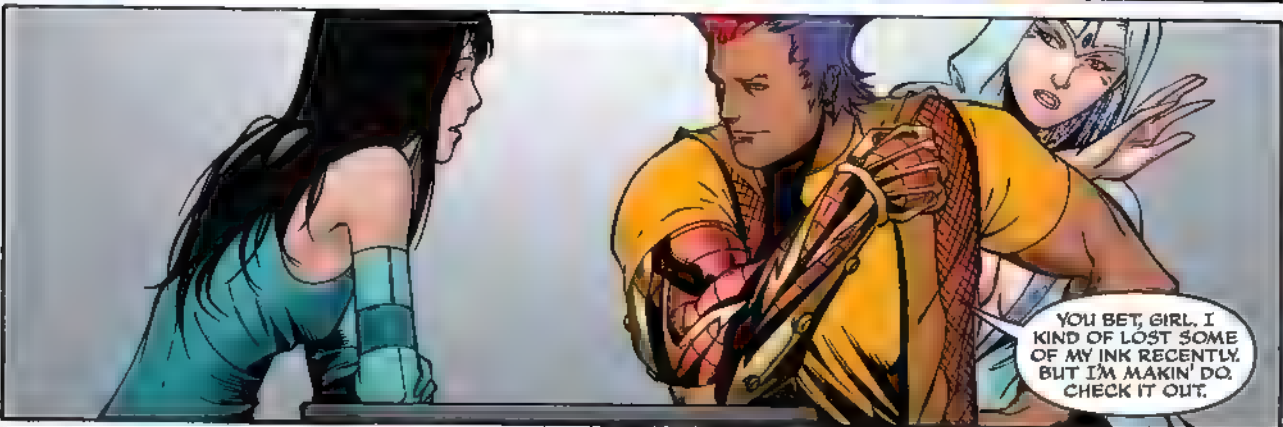


WELL, I'D SAY WE DEFINITELY BELONG HERE, DON'T YOU THINK? PEOPLE AREN'T EXACTLY HIDING THEIR MAGIC, ARE THEY?

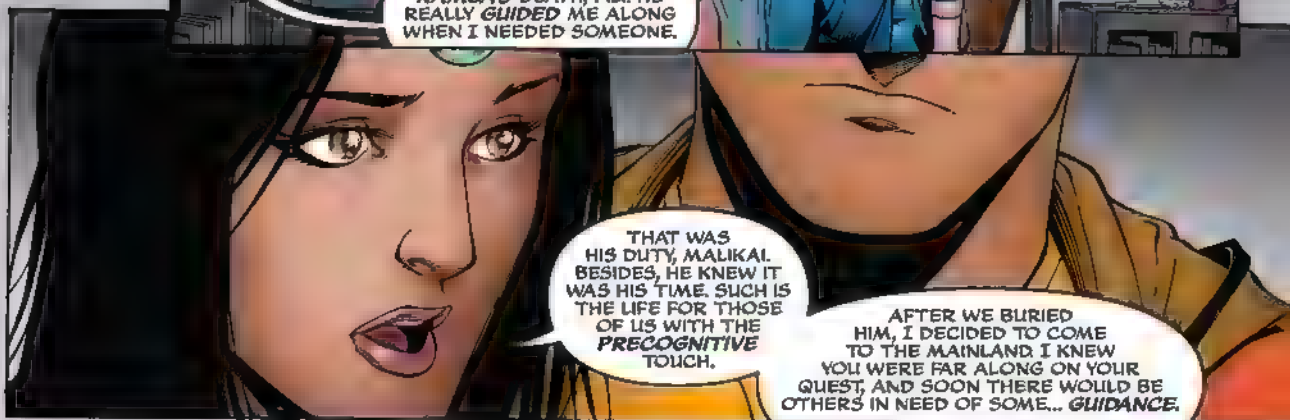
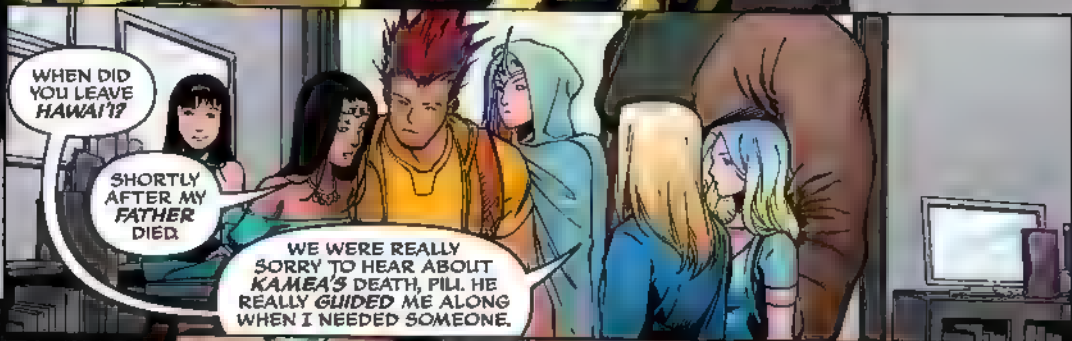
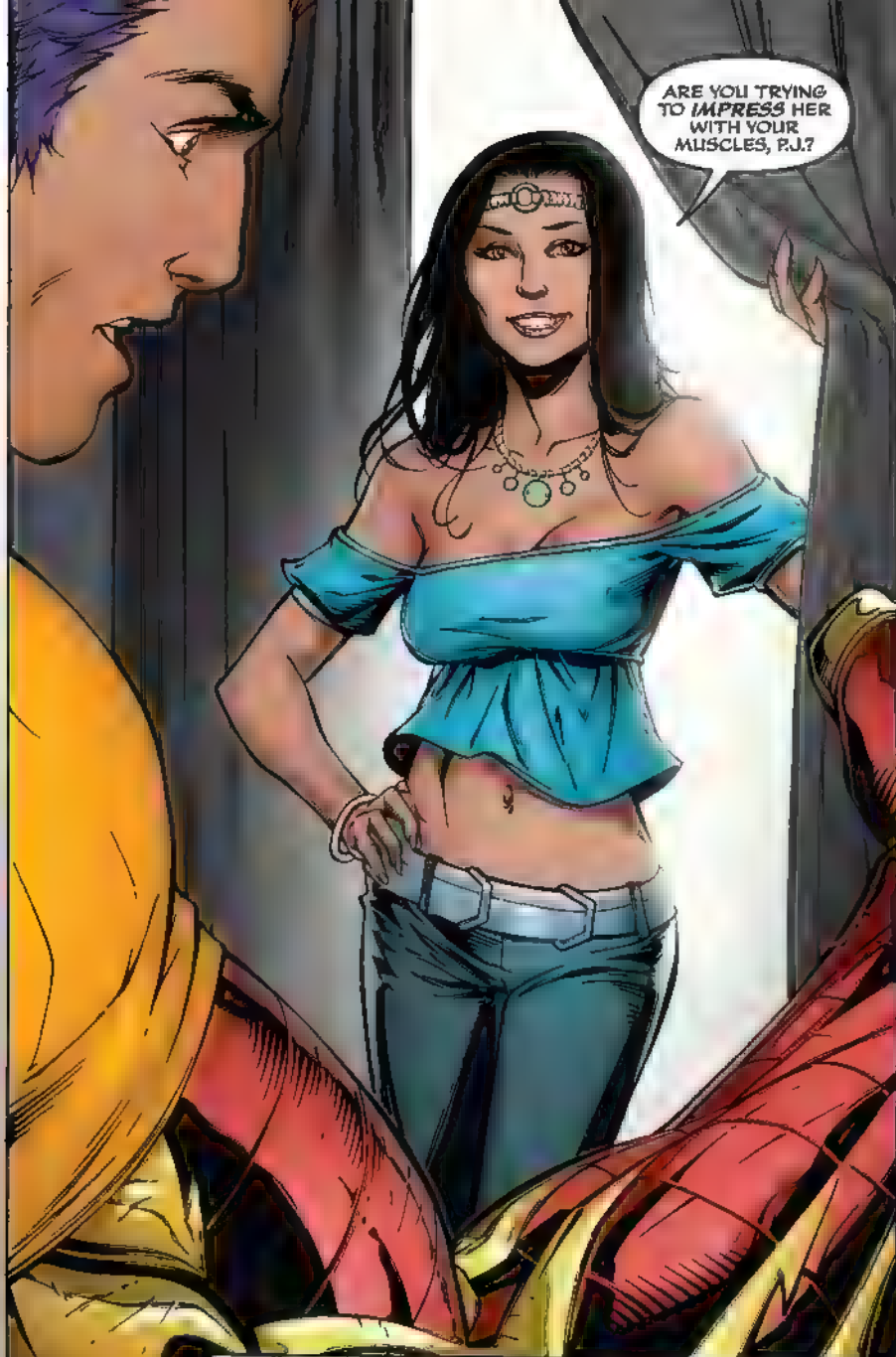


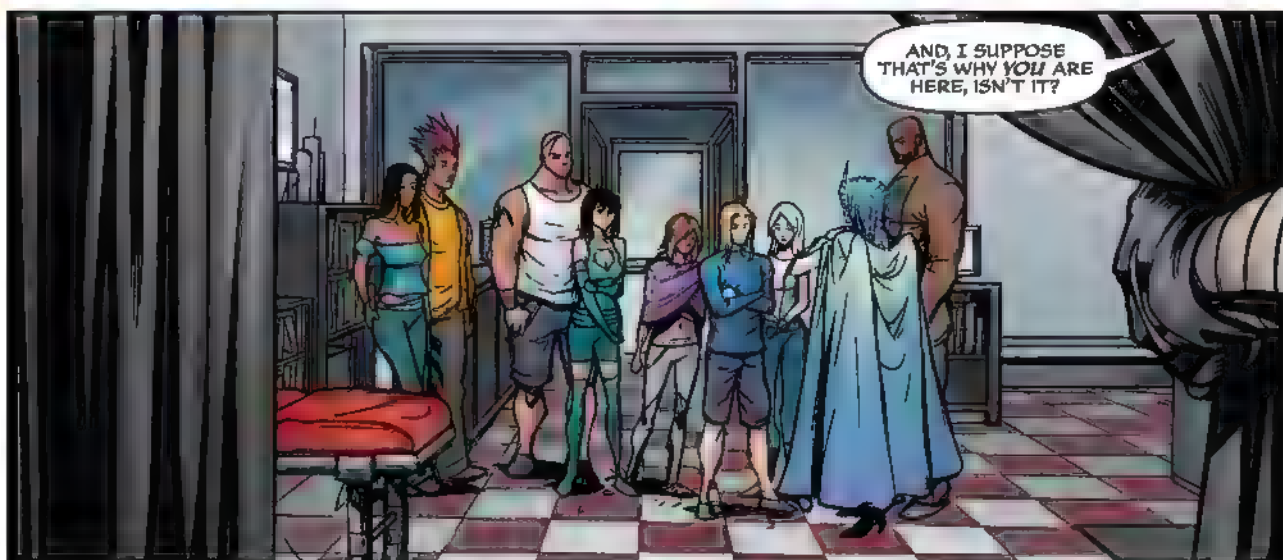
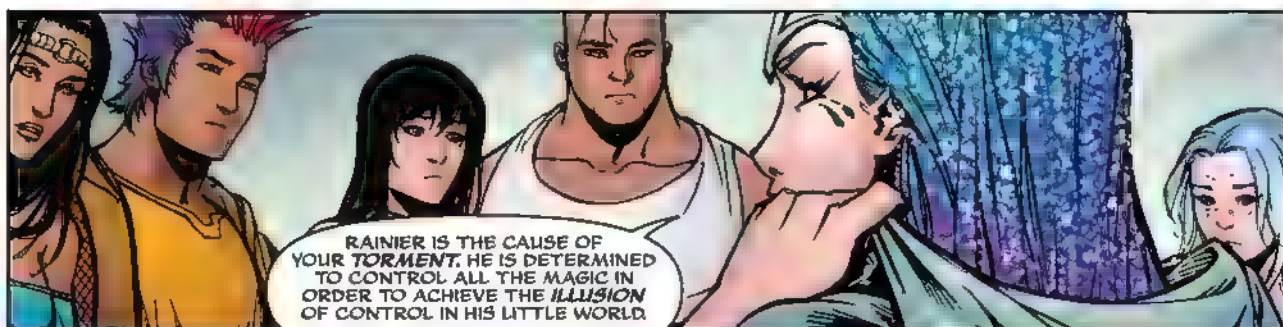
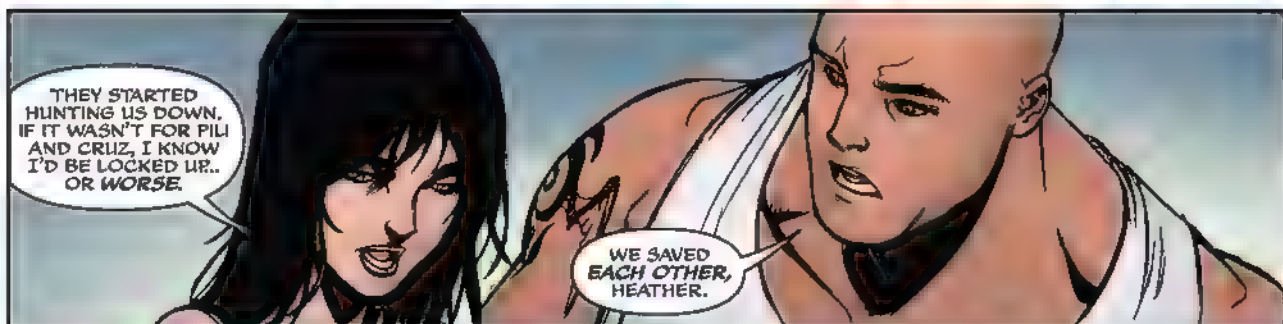
LOOKING TO GET SOME ART?

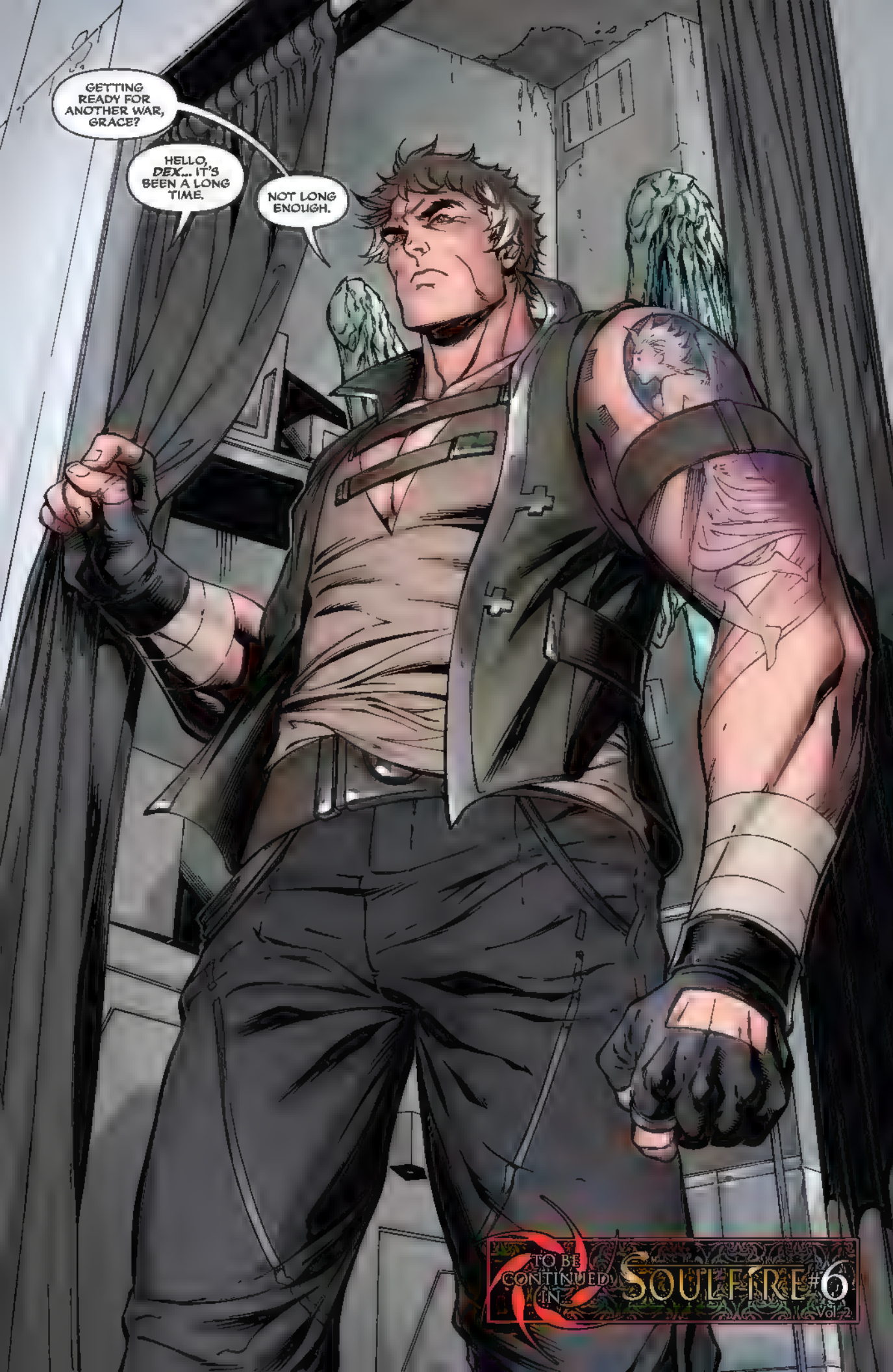
ACTUALLY, I CAME TO--



YOU BET, GIRL. I KIND OF LOST SOME OF MY INK RECENTLY. BUT I'M MAKIN' DO. CHECK IT OUT.







GETTING
READY FOR
ANOTHER WAR,
GRACE?

HELLO,
DEX... IT'S
BEEN A LONG
TIME.

NOT LONG
ENOUGH.

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#6

OF 9
COVER A

SOULFIRE



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Sotelo

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#6

OF 9
COVER B

SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE SIX OF NINE

Story: J. T. Krul

Pencils: Marcus To - Inks: Richard Zajac w/Nick Nix

Colors: Beth Sotelo - Letters: Josh Reed

Soulfire Created by: Michael Turner

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ | Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD | Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™ Vol. 2 Issue 6

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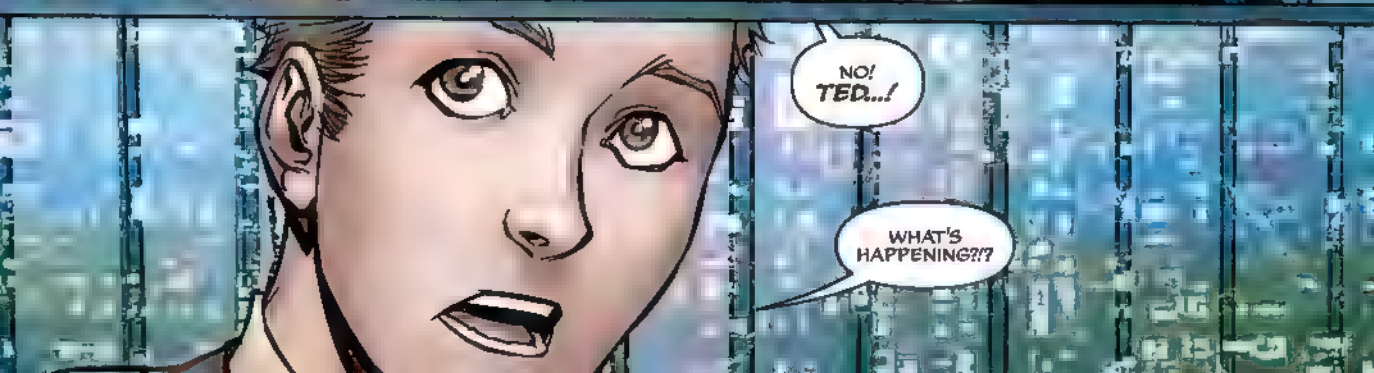
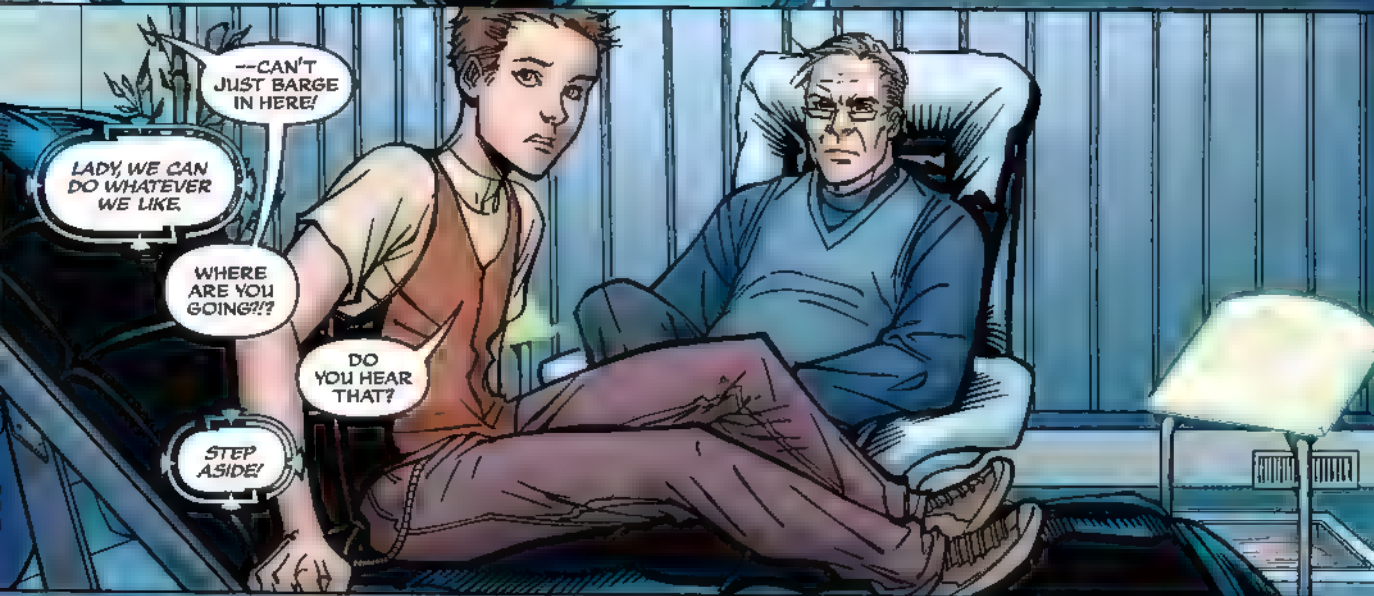
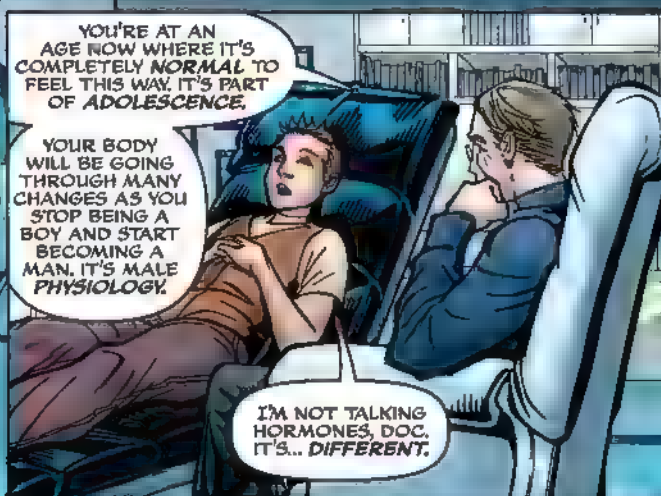
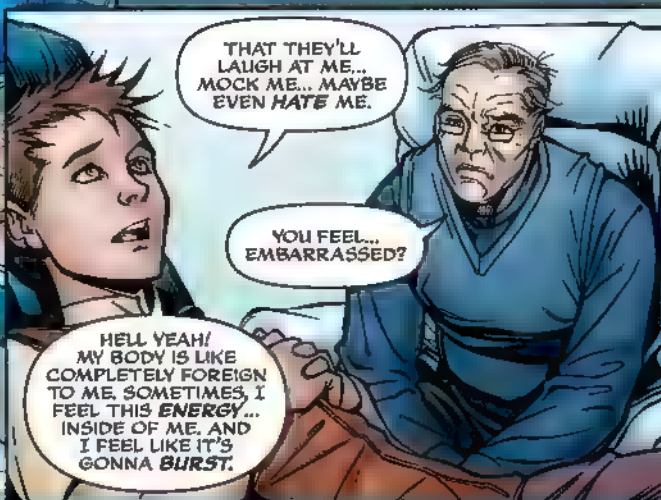
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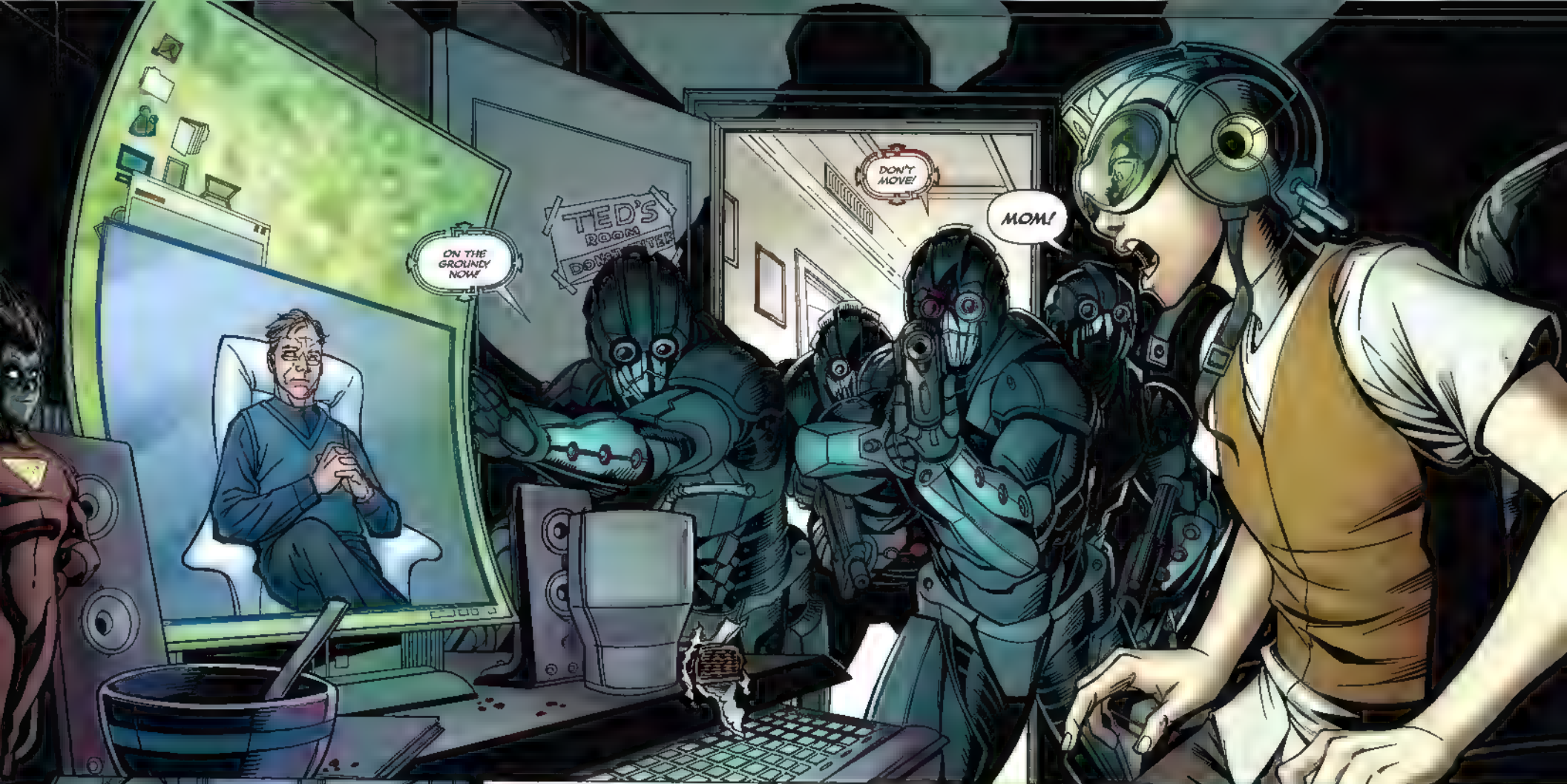
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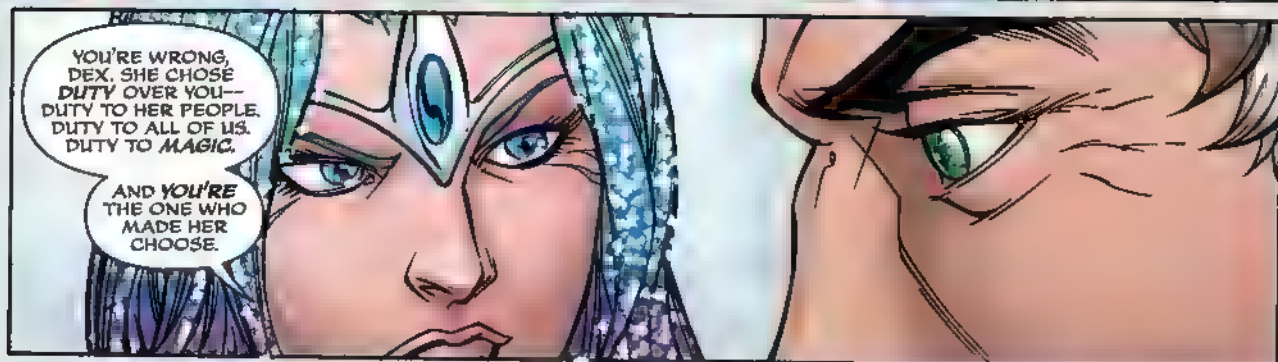
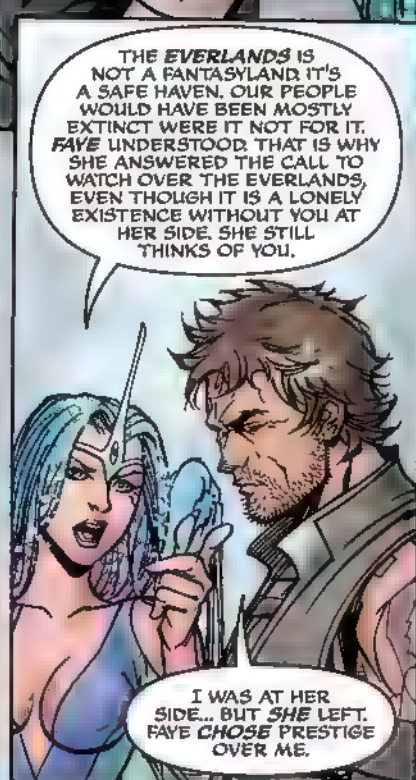
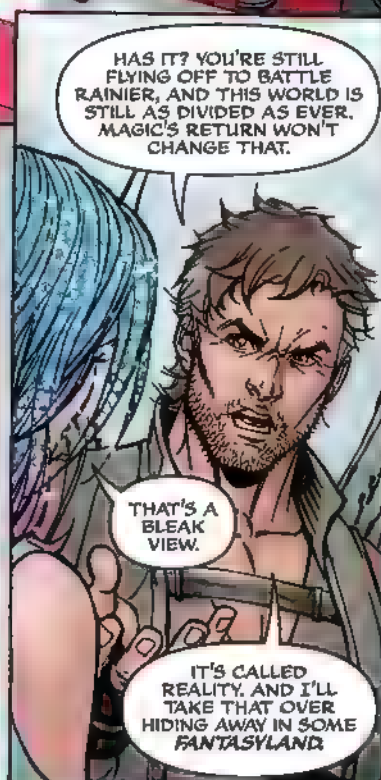
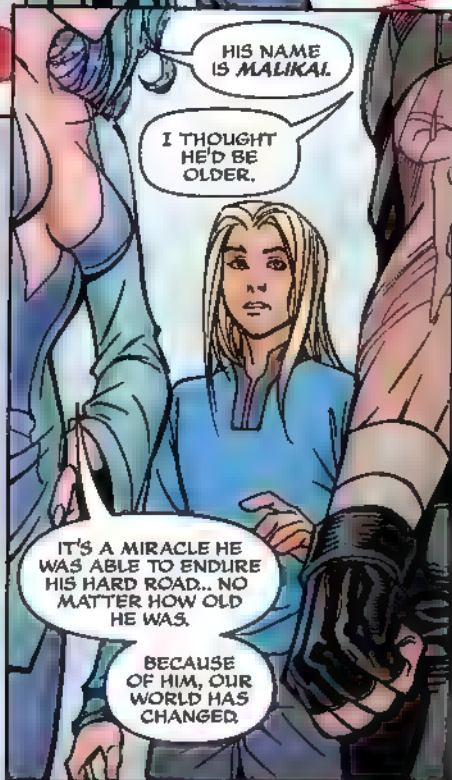
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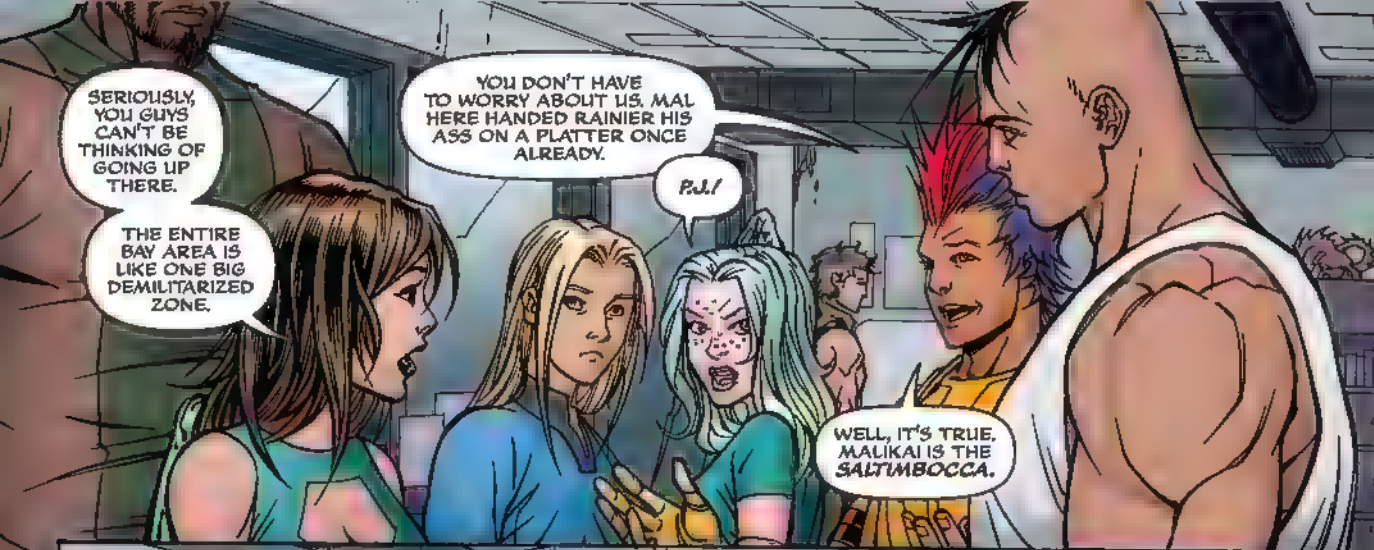
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SERIOUSLY, YOU GUYS CAN'T BE THINKING OF GOING UP THERE.

THE ENTIRE BAY AREA IS LIKE ONE BIG DEMILITARIZED ZONE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT US. MAL HERE HANDED RAINIER HIS ASS ON A PLATTER ONCE ALREADY.

P.J.!

WELL, IT'S TRUE. MALIKAI IS THE SALTUMBOCCA.

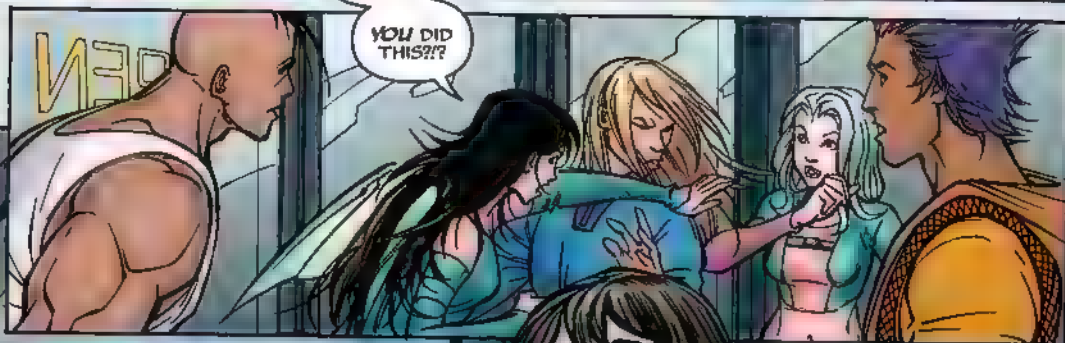


SAMUSARA.

WHATEVER. HE'S THE ONE WHO SPARKED THE RETURN OF MAGIC IN THE FIRST PLACE. HE'S THE MAN.

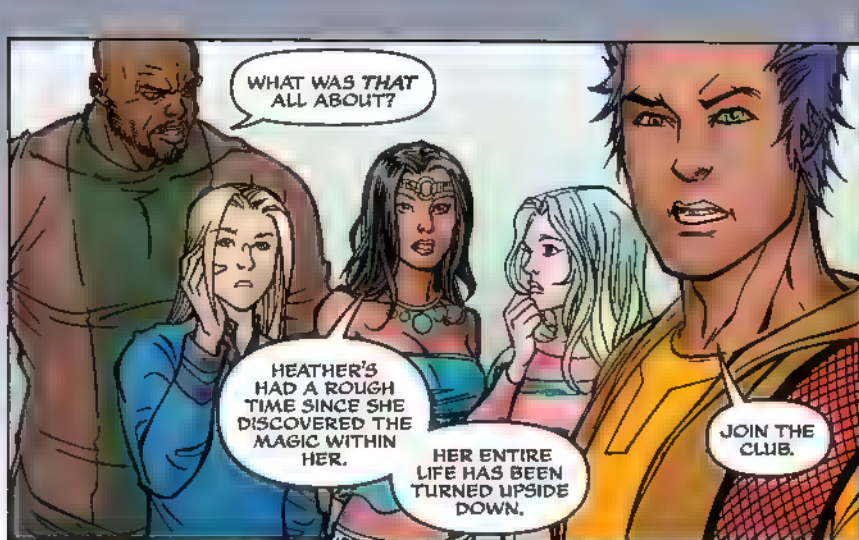
WHAT??

YOU DID THIS???



HEATHER! WAIT!





WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

HEATHER'S HAD A ROUGH TIME SINCE SHE DISCOVERED THE MAGIC WITHIN HER.

HER ENTIRE LIFE HAS BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

JOIN THE CLUB.



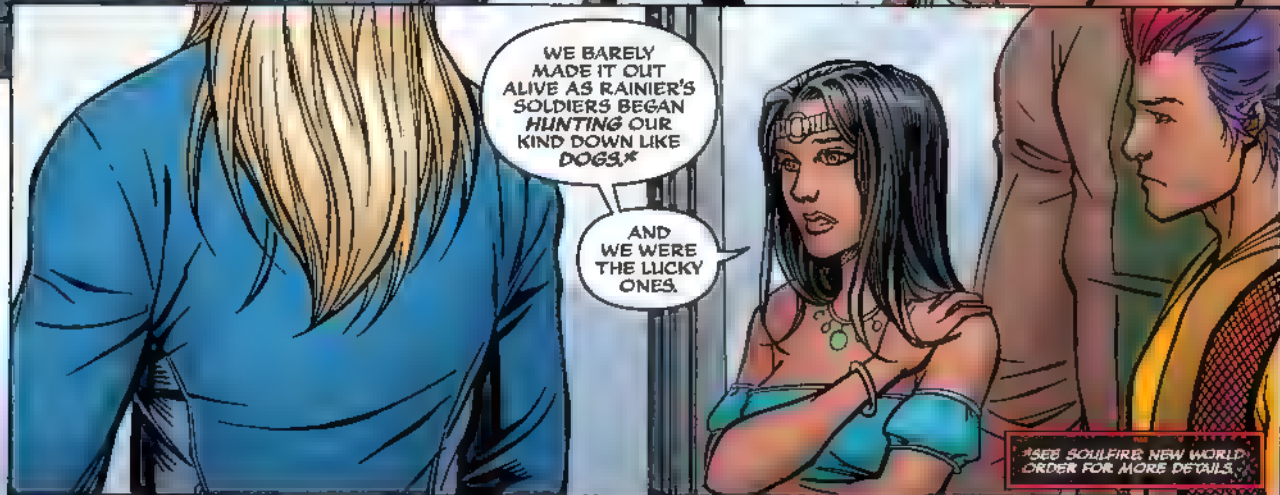
NOT EVERYONE CAN BE AS STRONG AS YOU. BESIDES, YOU ALL HAVE EACH OTHER. HEATHER WAS FORCED TO COPE WITH THIS ALONE.



WELL, AT LEAST SHE ISN'T ALONE ANYMORE.

THE LAST TIME I WAS IN SAN FRANCISCO, A GIANT DRAGON WAS BURNING THE CITY TO THE GROUND AND YOU'RE SAYING THAT IT HASN'T GOTTEN ANY BETTER?

RAINIER IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE REGION, AND HE'S RULING THROUGH FEAR AND IMPUNITY.



WE BARELY MADE IT OUT ALIVE AS RAINIER'S SOLDIERS BEGAN HUNTING OUR KIND DOWN LIKE DOGS.*

AND WE WERE THE LUCKY ONES.

*SEE SOULFIRE NEW WORLD ORDER FOR MORE DETAILS.



I DIDN'T COME TO OPEN OLD WOUNDS, DEX.

THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

RAINIER MUST BE STOPPED AND I COULD USE YOUR HELP.

NO THANKS, GRACE. I'M NOT A BIG PICTURE KIND OF GUY. I PREFER TO MANAGE MY OWN LITTLE WORLD.



CAREFUL, DON'T SMUDGE THE TAIL.

THEY LOOK AMAZING.

THAT'S BECAUSE DRAGONS ARE AMAZING CREATURES— PURE AND UNBRIDLED.

YES... THE SYMBOL OF MAGIC ITSELF.



YOU REMEMBER HOW RAINIER POISONED THEIR MINDS DURING THE GREAT WAR?

OF COURSE, I DO. ONLY SOMEONE LIKE HIM COULD TWIST SOMETHING SO MAJESTIC INTO A WEAPON SO CRUEL.

WHICH IS ACTUALLY WHY WE ARE GOING AFTER RAINIER.

HE'S CAPTURED A DRAGON AND ITS NEWBORN.

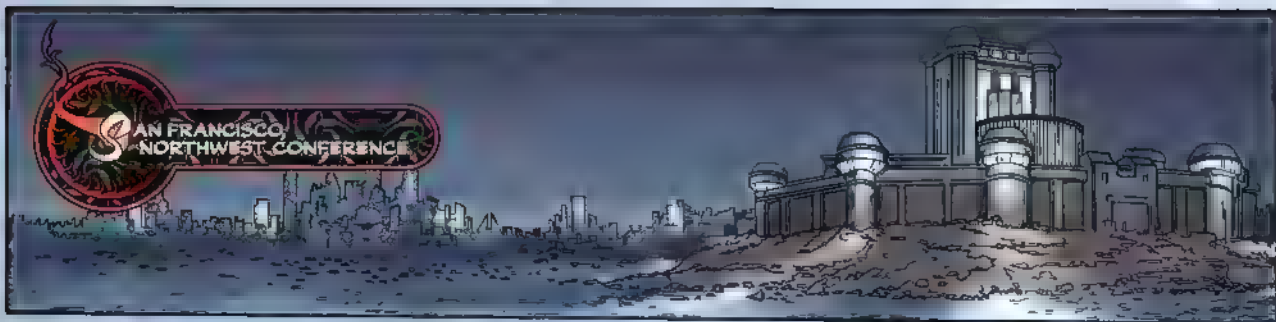


THE DRAGONS?

THEY'VE RETURNED???

YES, BUT THEY ARE NOT SAFE. WHO KNOWS WHAT HORRORS RAINIER IS PERFORMING ON THEM RIGHT NOW.

WHEN DO WE LEAVE?





ELSEWHERE

IN THIS MODERN
WORLD, I HAVE
PLAYED THE GAMES
OF CIVILIZATION.

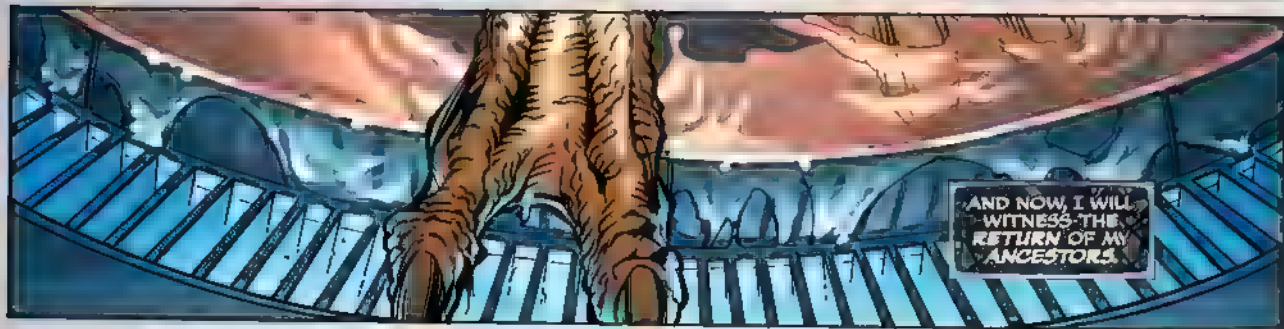
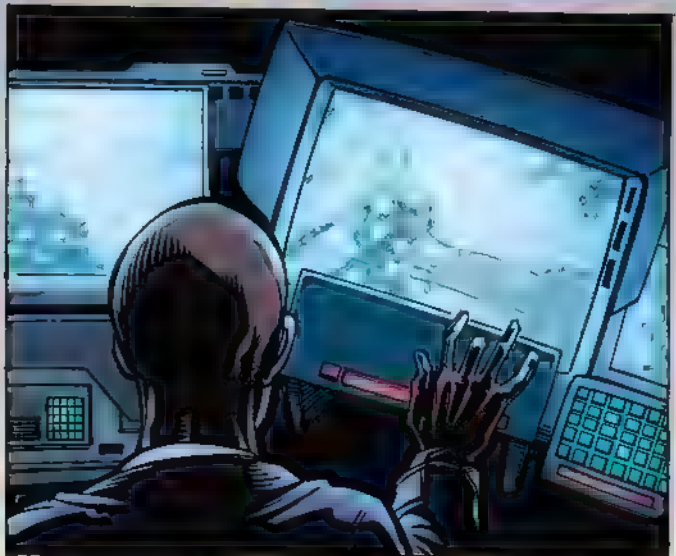
ALLOWING THOSE AROUND
ME TO SEE MY MOTIVES AS
TRULY MATERIALISTIC—
FOCUSED ON SUCH
FLEETING GOALS AS
WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.



BUT THIS...
THIS IS MY
TRUE GOAL.



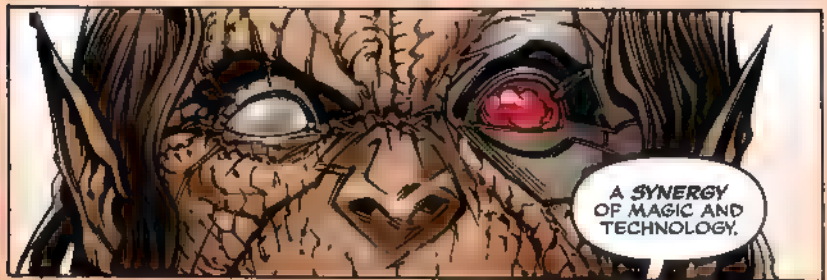
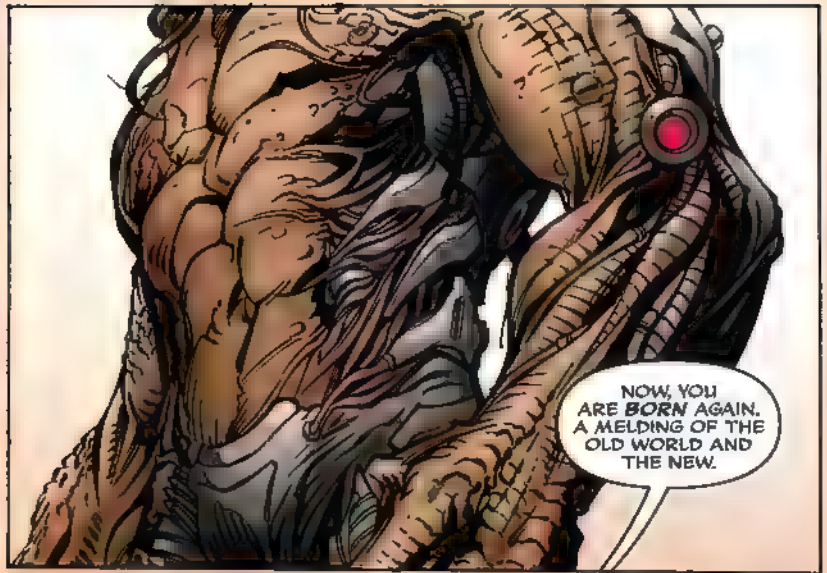
THOUSANDS OF
YEARS AGO, MY KIND
WERE HUNTED AND
DESTROYED LIKE
MONSTERS. THEY
TRIED TO KILL ME
AS WELL, BUT I
ALONE SURVIVED.

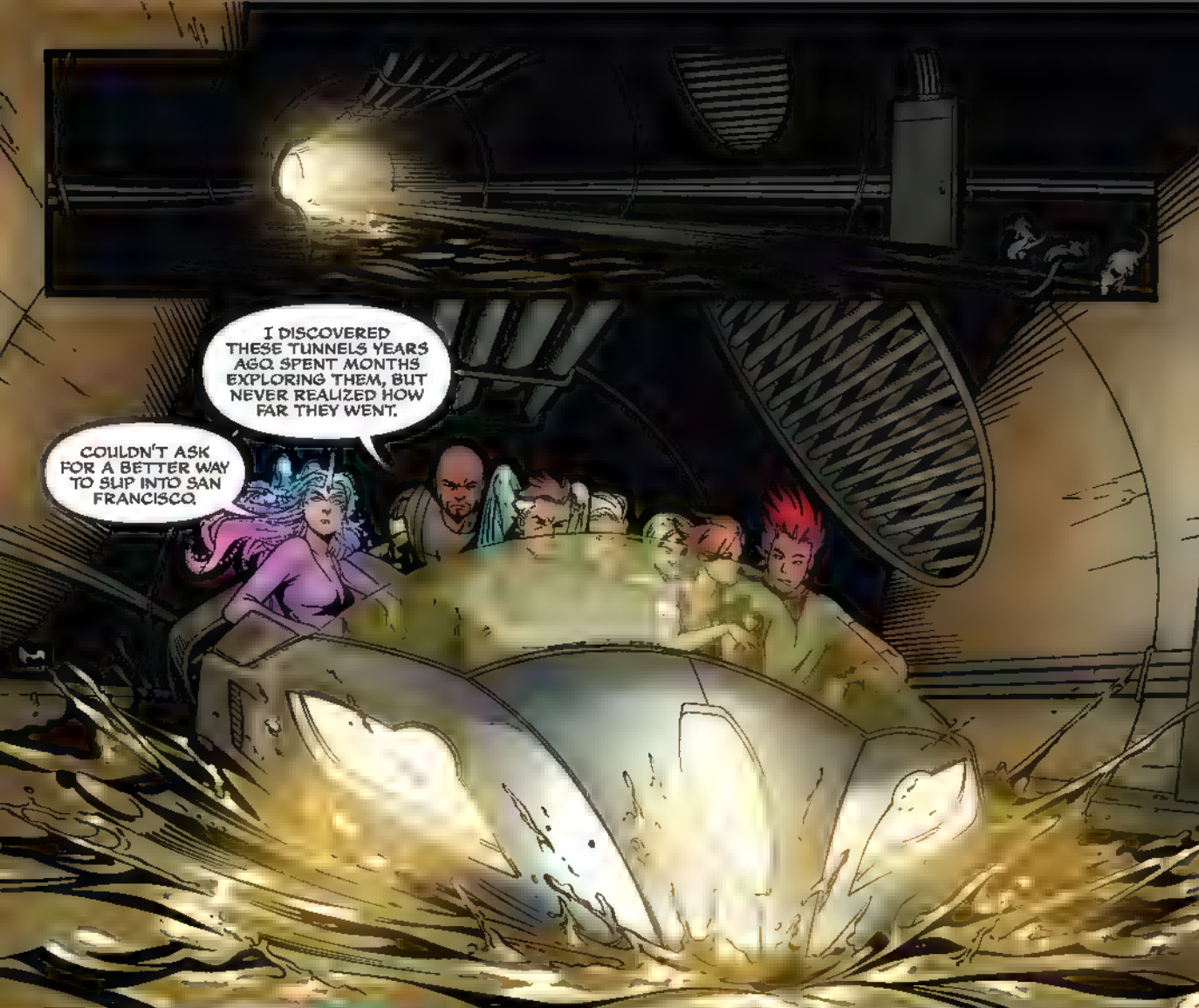


AND NOW, I WILL
WITNESS THE
RETURN OF MY
ANCESTORS.



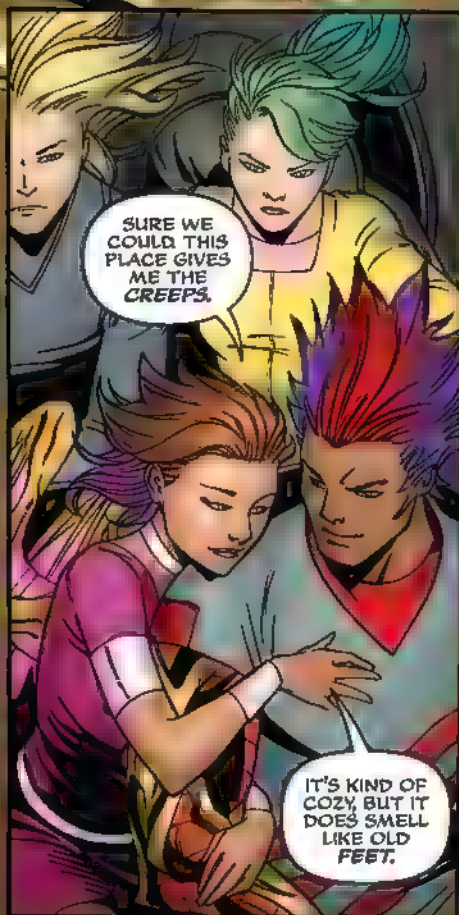
THE
NIGHTSTALKERS
LIVE ONCE
MORE!





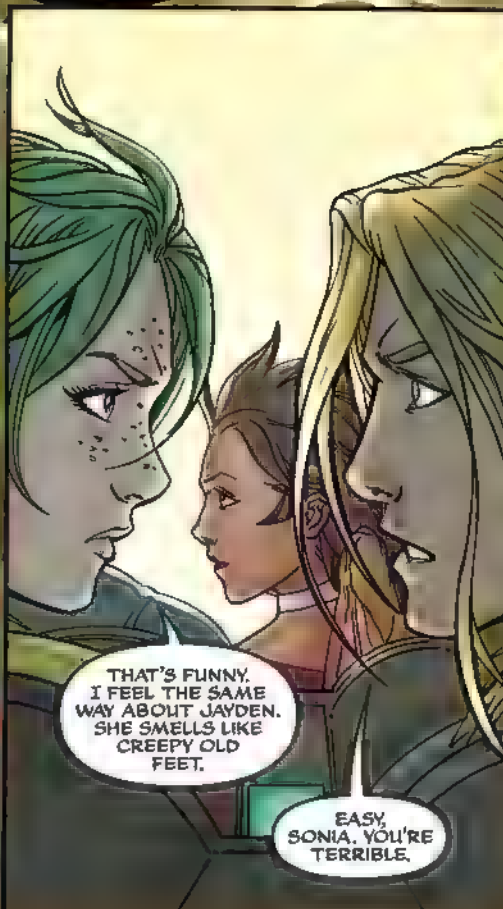
I DISCOVERED
THESE TUNNELS YEARS
AGO. SPENT MONTHS
EXPLORING THEM, BUT
NEVER REALIZED HOW
FAR THEY WENT.

COULDN'T ASK
FOR A BETTER WAY
TO SLIP INTO SAN
FRANCISCO.



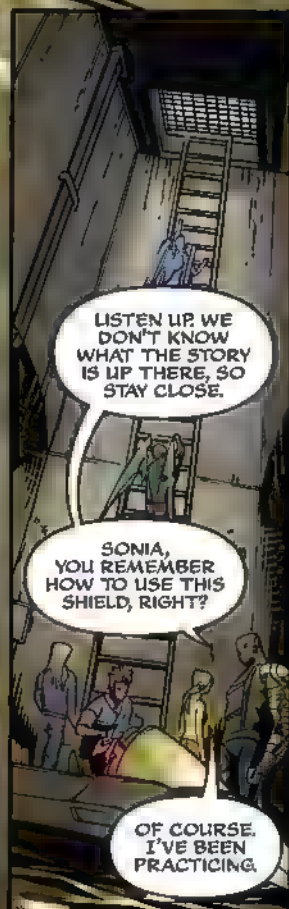
SURE WE
COULD THIS
PLACE GIVES
ME THE
CREEPS.

IT'S KIND OF
COZY, BUT IT
DOES SMELL
LIKE OLD
FEET.



THAT'S FUNNY.
I FEEL THE SAME
WAY ABOUT JAYDEN.
SHE SMELLS LIKE
CREEPY OLD
FEET.

EASY,
SONIA. YOU'RE
TERRIBLE.



LISTEN UP. WE
DON'T KNOW
WHAT THE STORY
IS UP THERE, SO
STAY CLOSE.

SONIA,
YOU REMEMBER
HOW TO USE THIS
SHIELD, RIGHT?

OF COURSE.
I'VE BEEN
PRACTICING.



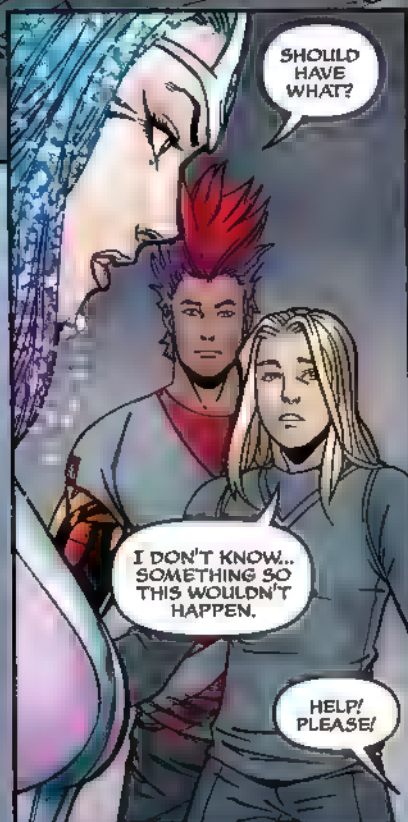
IT'S EXACTLY
WHAT RAINIER
DOES TO HIS
SUBJECTS.

HIS
SUBJECTS?
RAINIER IS
NO KING.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE THIS
IS THE SAME
CITY.

HEATHER
WAS WRONG. IT'S
NOT A DMZ, IT'S
A DISASTER
ZONE.

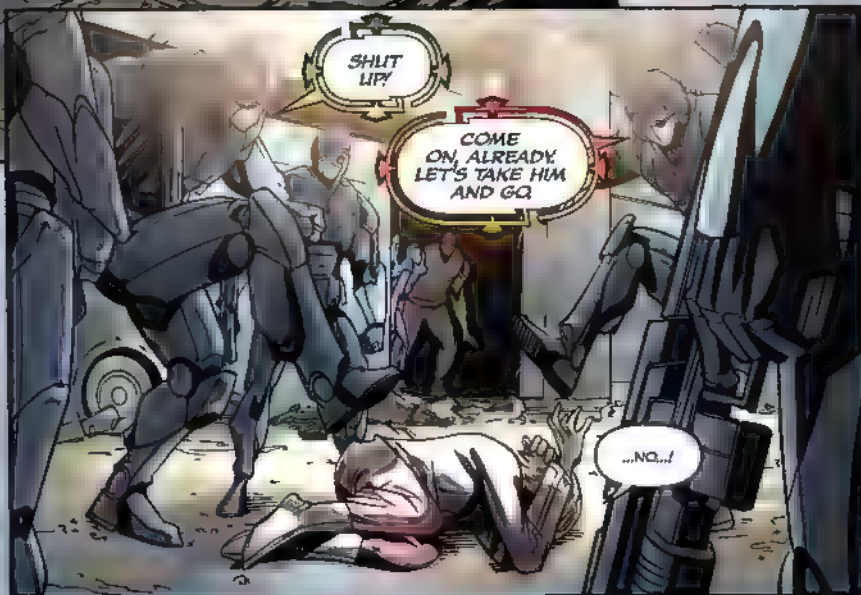
WE
SHOULDN'T
HAVE LET HIM
GET AWAY IN
THE EVERLANDS.
I SHOULD
HAVE...



SHOULD
HAVE
WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW...
SOMETHING SO
THIS WOULDN'T
HAPPEN.

HELP!
PLEASE!



SHUT
UP!

COME
ON, ALREADY.
LET'S TAKE HIM
AND GO.

...NO...

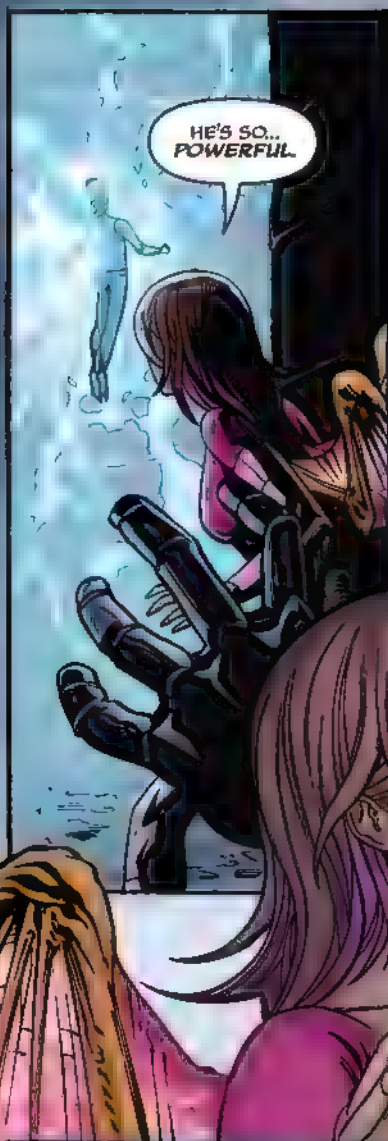


WHAT DO
WE DO?

EXACTLY
WHAT WE
CAME HERE
TO DO...



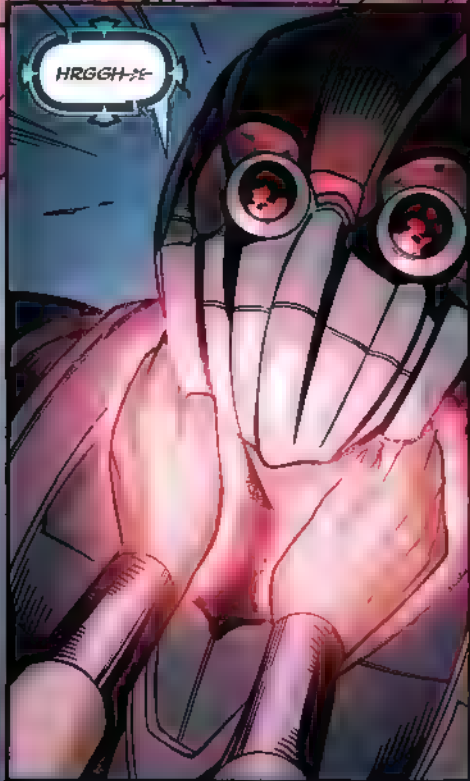
WE
FIGHT FOR
MAGIC!



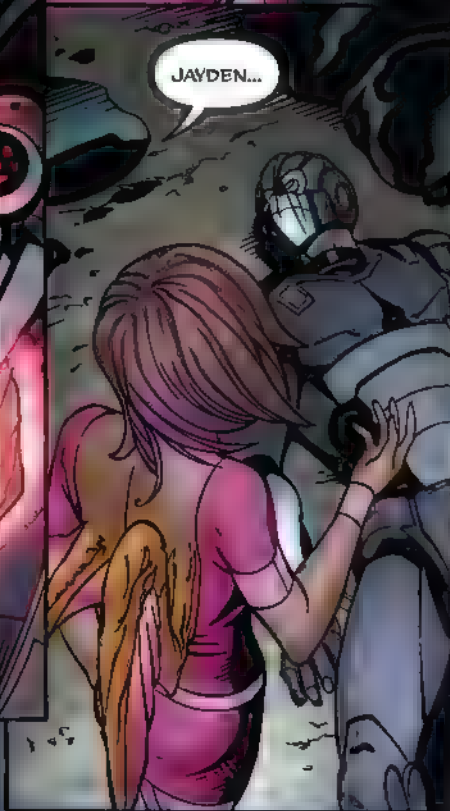
HE'S SO...
POWERFUL

WHAT HAVE
WE GOT
HERE?

HEY!



HRGGH-~~ff~~



JAYDEN...



...ARE YOU
OKAY?

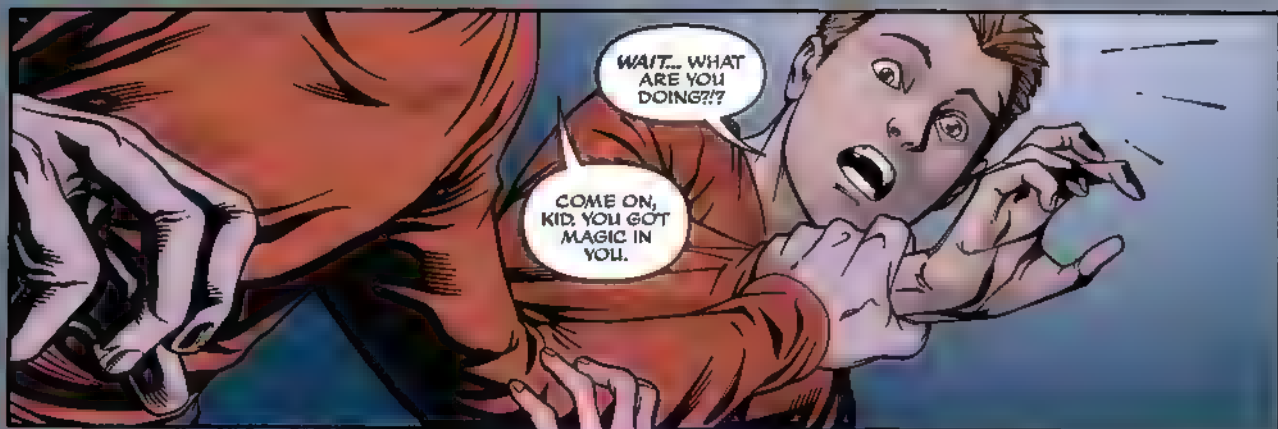
YEAH. NEVER
BETTER.





TOO LATE!







GOD, I
NEEDED
THAT.



#7
OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL RUPPEL SULFIRE



⌘

Sotelo



VOL. 2

#7

OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE SEVEN OF NINE

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Pencils: Marcus To - Inks: Richard Zajac

Colors: Beth Sotelo w/ John Smith, David Curiel, & Emilio Lopez

Letters: Josh Reed

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WHEN I FIRST DISCOVERED
MY CONNECTION TO THE
RETURNING WORLD OF
MAGIC, I WAS PRETTY
FREAKED OUT.

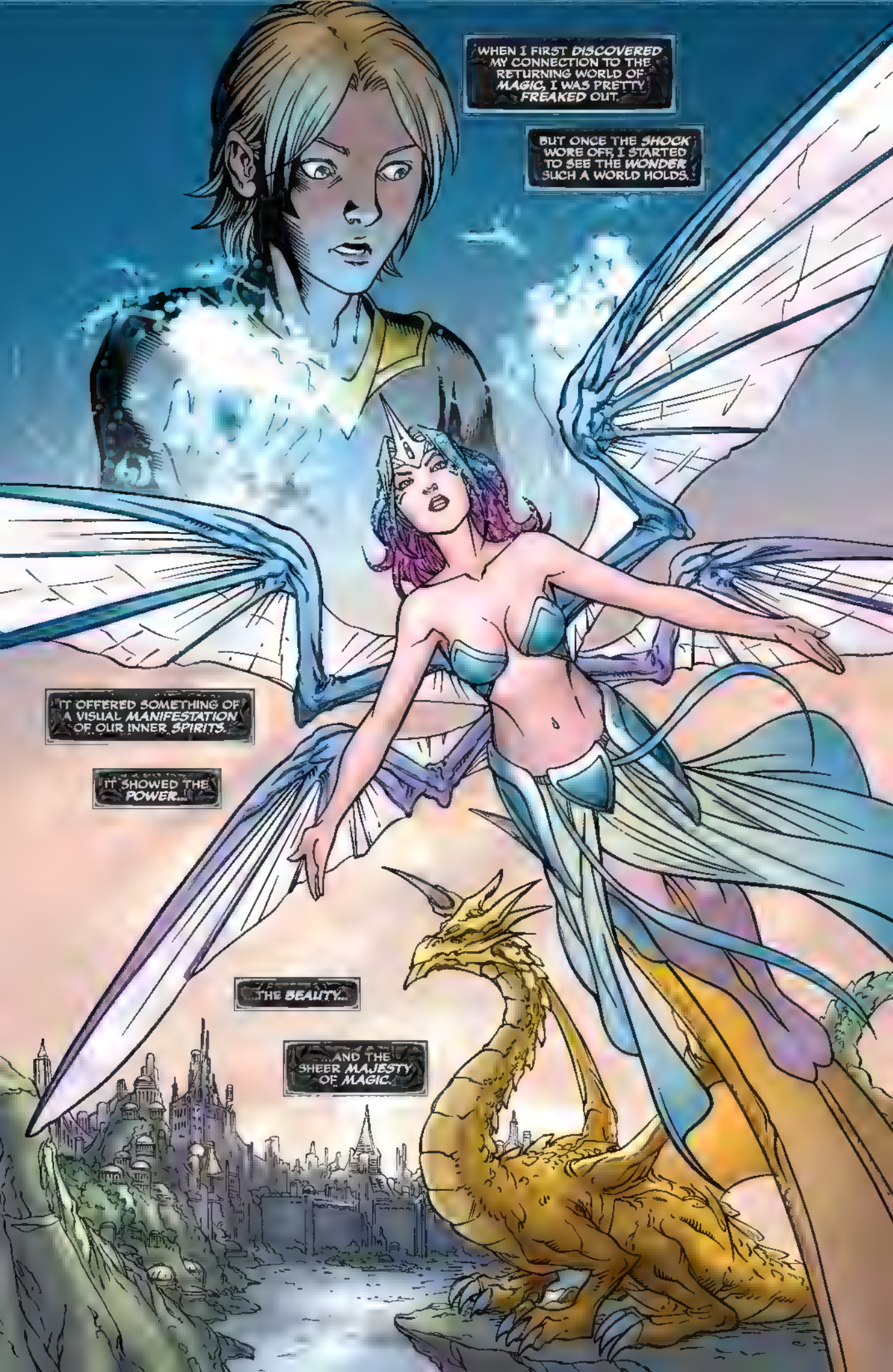
BUT ONCE THE SHOCK
WORE OFF I STARTED
TO SEE THE WONDER
SUCH A WORLD HOLDS.

IT OFFERED SOMETHING OF
A VISUAL MANIFESTATION
OF OUR INNER SPIRITS.

IT SHOWED THE
POWER...

...THE BEAUTY...

...AND THE
SHEER MAJESTY
OF MAGIC.



LEAVE IT TO RAINIER
TO POISON SOMETHING
SO PURE.

SKRIIEE







THESE
CREATURES
SEEM FAMILIAR
TO ME.

DEX, DO YOU
REMEMBER THE
STORIES FROM OUR
CHILDHOOD?



ABOUT THE
ANCIENT THIEVES
WHO STOLE CHILDREN
AWAY UNDER THE
LIGHT OF THE
MOON?

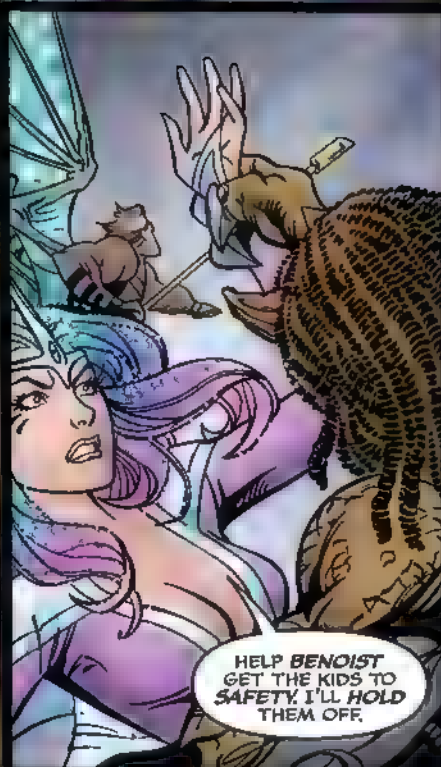


YES. THE
NIGHTSTALKERS!

THEY
HAUNTED MORE
THAN ONE OF MY
SLEEPLESS
NIGHTS.

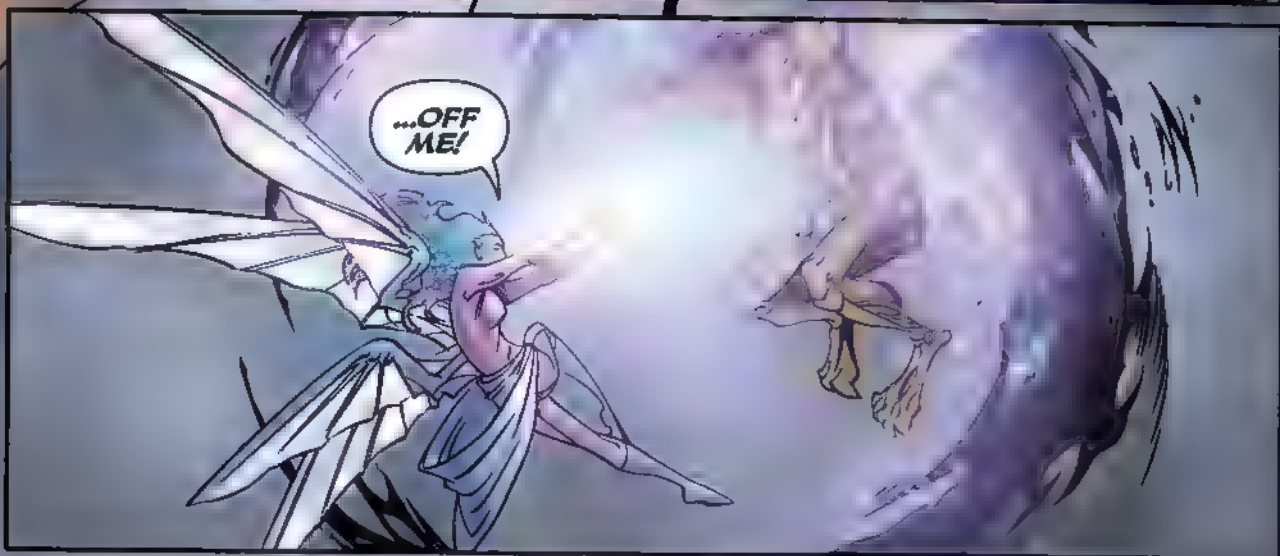


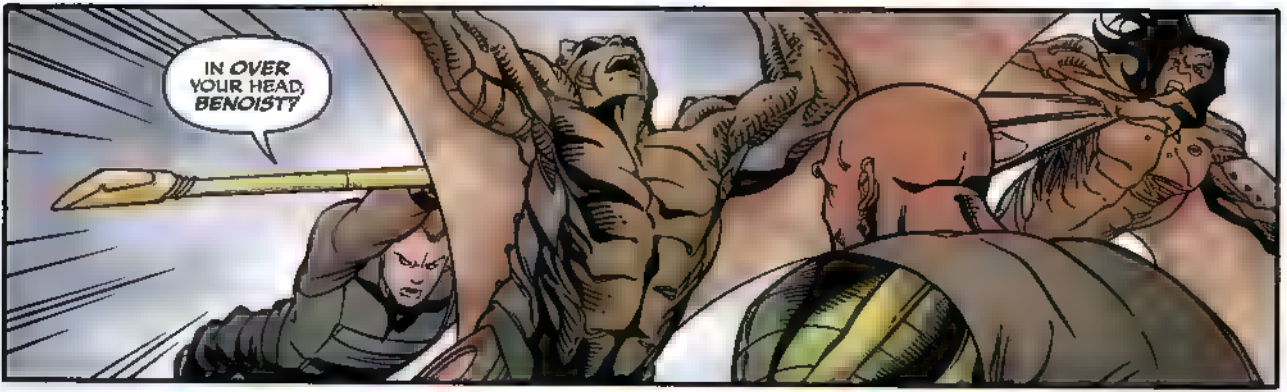
IT'S AS
IF RAINIER IS
TURNING MYTH
INTO REALITY.



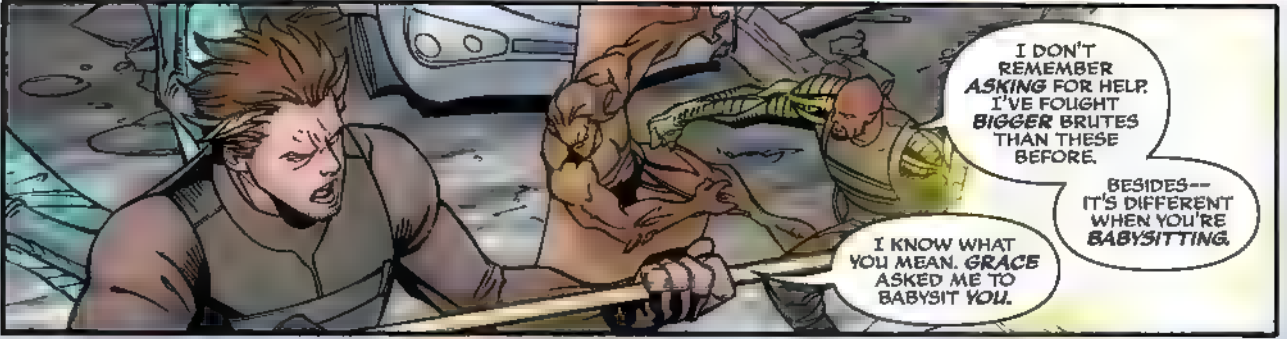
HELP BENOIST
GET THE KIDS TO
SAFETY. I'LL HOLD
THEM OFF.







IN OVER
YOUR HEAD,
BENOISTY



I DON'T
REMEMBER
ASKING FOR HELP.
I'VE FOUGHT
BIGGER BRUTES
THAN THESE
BEFORE.

BESIDES---
IT'S DIFFERENT
WHEN YOU'RE
BABYSITTING.

I KNOW WHAT
YOU MEAN. GRACE
ASKED ME TO
BABYSIT YOU.



GO!

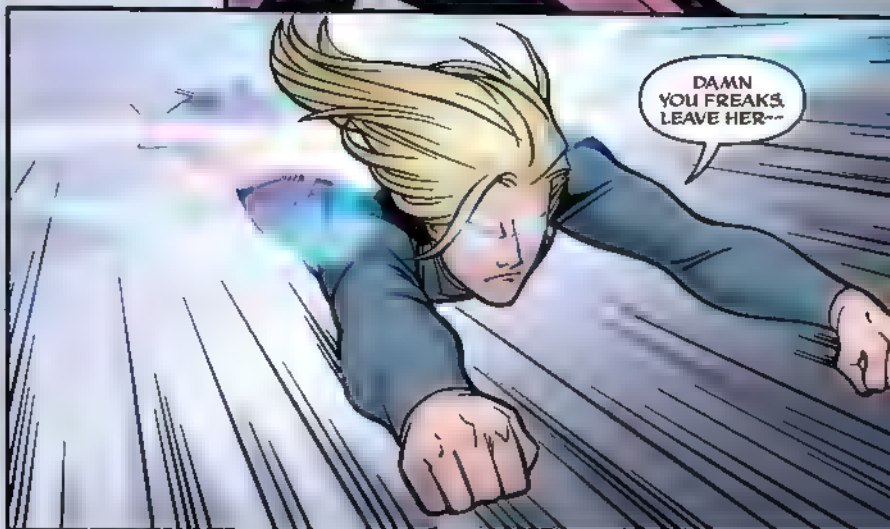
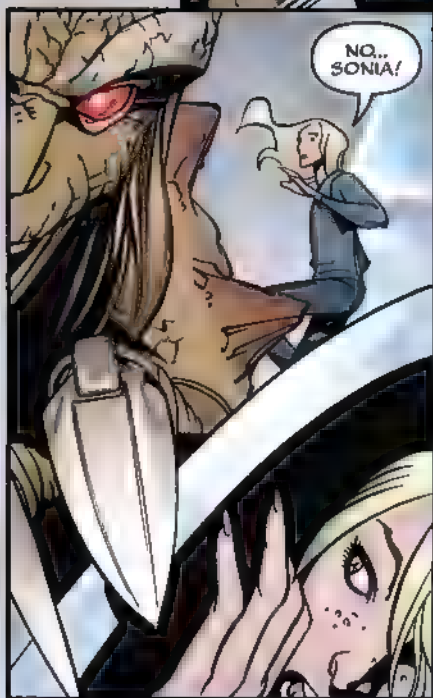


I'M NOT SCARED
OF THESE FOOLS.
LET'S TAKE 'EM!

JUST
RUNNING,
KID!

BEING SCARED
RIGHT NOW IS THE
SMART THING.

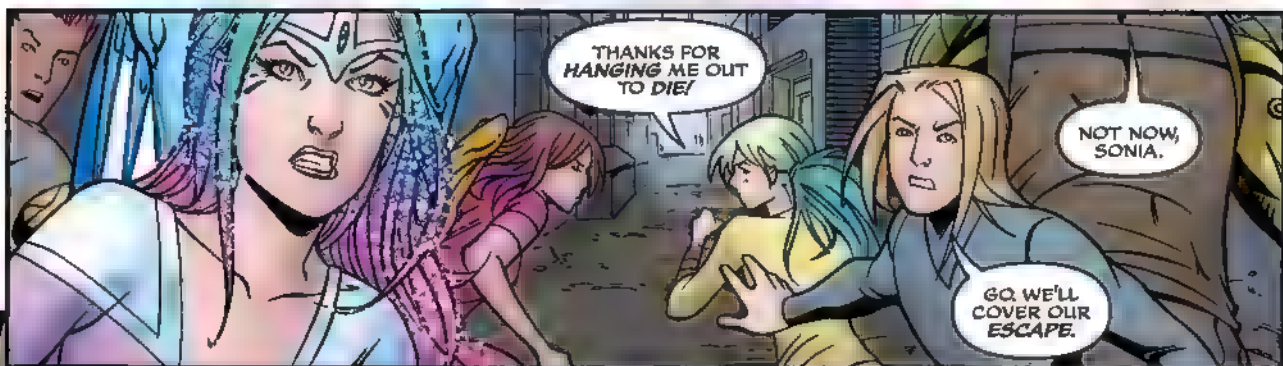
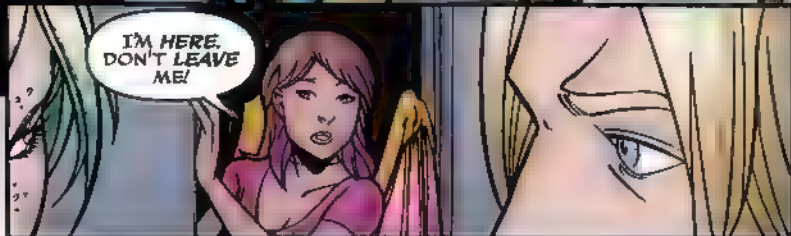
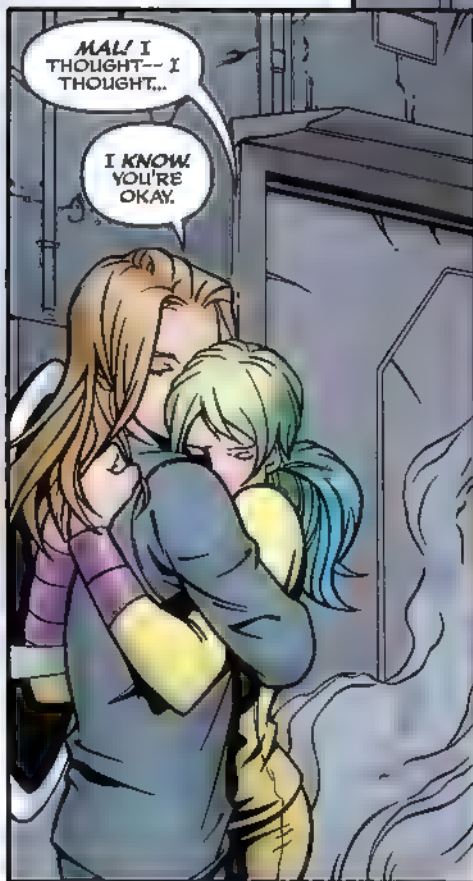


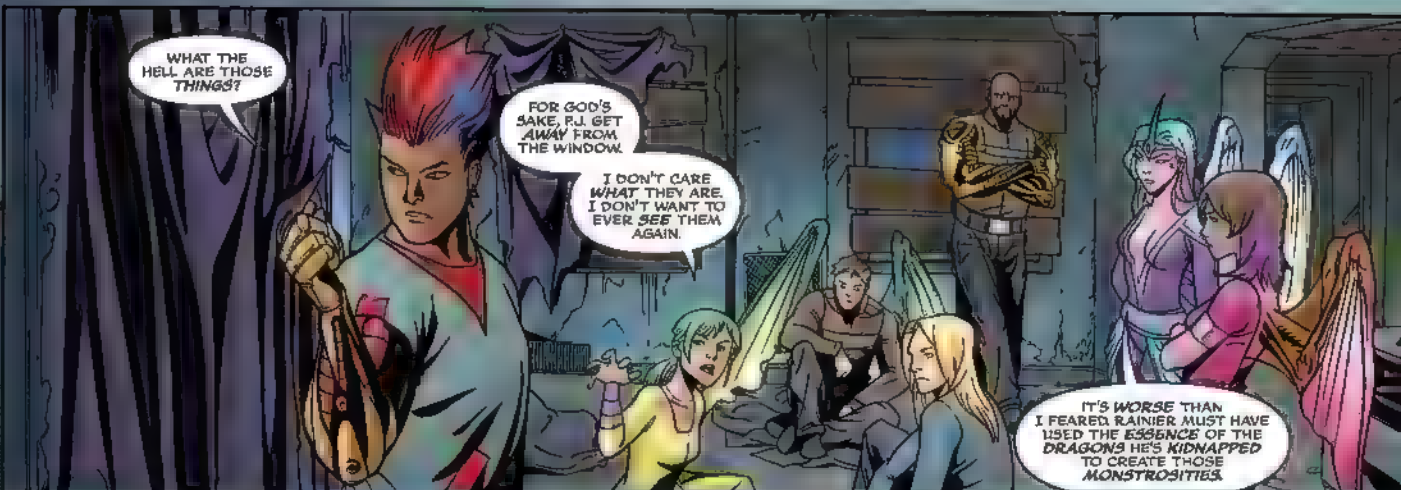
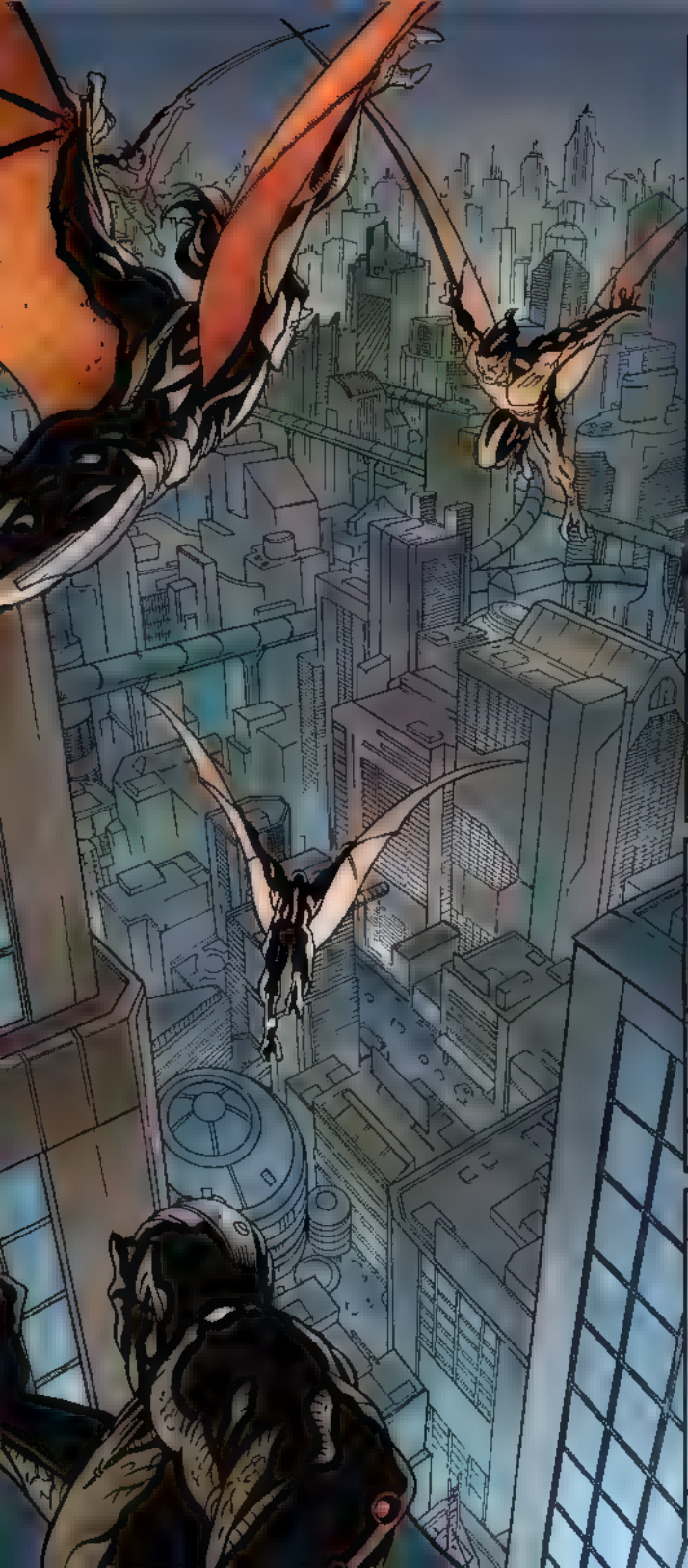




--ALONE!

RA



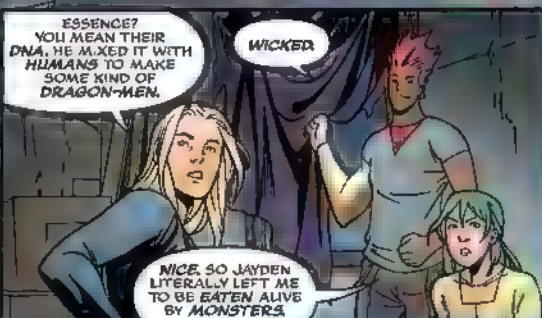


WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE THINGS?

FOR GOD'S SAKE, P.J. GET AWAY FROM THE WINDOW.

I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY ARE. I DON'T WANT TO EVER SEE THEM AGAIN.

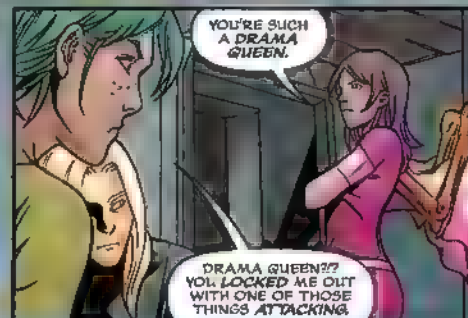
IT'S WORSE THAN I FEARED. RAINIER MUST HAVE USED THE ESSENCE OF THE DRAGON'S HE'S KIDNAPPED TO CREATE THOSE MONSTROSITIES.



ESSENCE? YOU MEAN THEIR DNA. HE MIXED IT WITH HUMANS TO MAKE SOME KIND OF DRAGON-MEN.

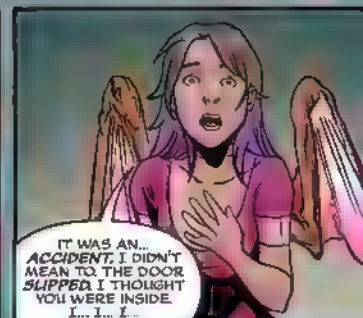
WICKED.

NICE, SO JAYDEN LITERALLY LEFT ME TO BE EATEN ALIVE BY MONSTERS.

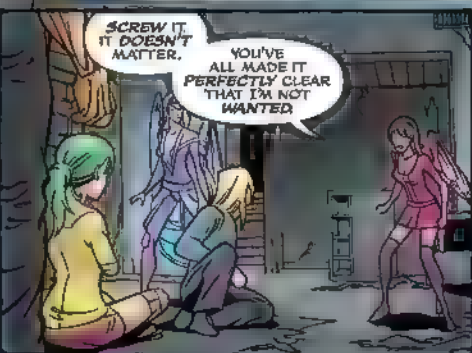


YOU'RE SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN.

DRAMA QUEEN?? YOU LOCKED ME OUT WITH ONE OF THOSE THINGS ATTACKING.

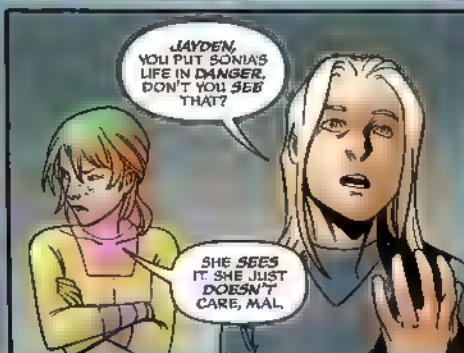


IT WAS AN... ACCIDENT. I DIDN'T MEAN TO THE DOOR SLIPPED. I THOUGHT YOU WERE INSIDE. I... I... I...



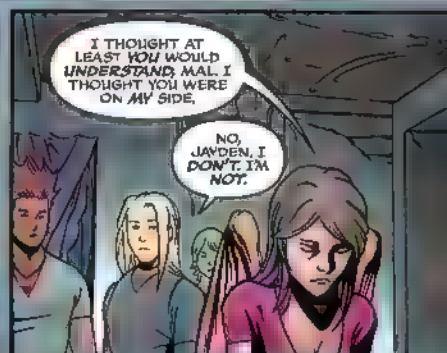
SCREW IT. IT DOESN'T MATTER.

YOU'VE ALL MADE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT I'M NOT WANTED.



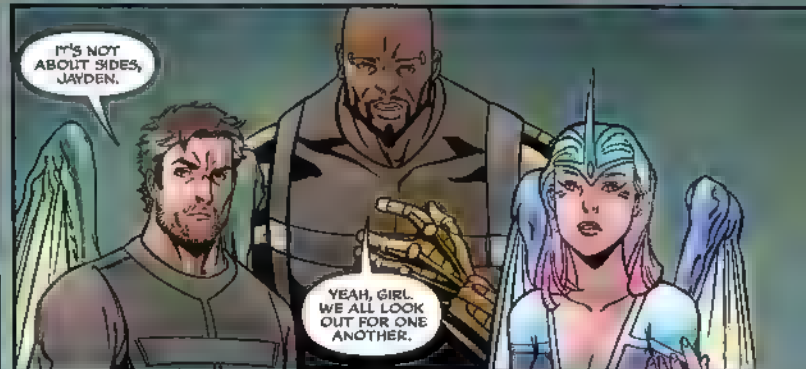
JAYDEN, YOU PUT SONIA'S LIFE IN DANGER. DON'T YOU SEE THAT?

SHE SEES IT. SHE JUST DOESN'T CARE, MAL.



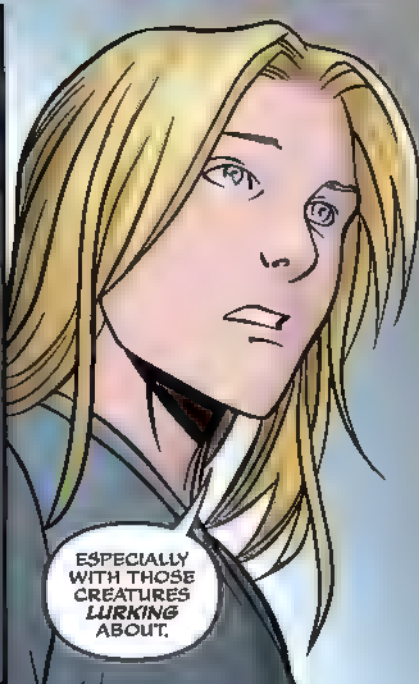
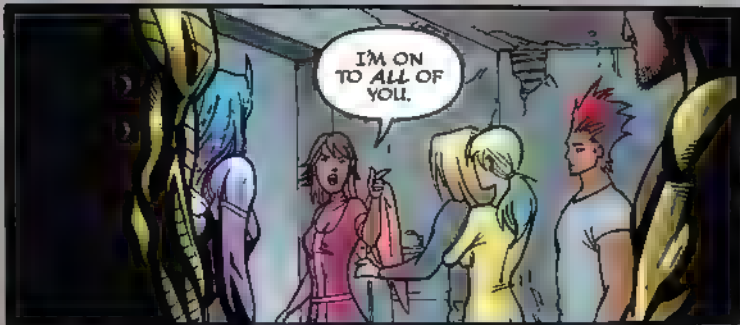
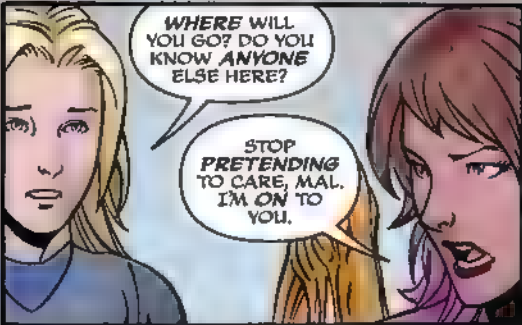
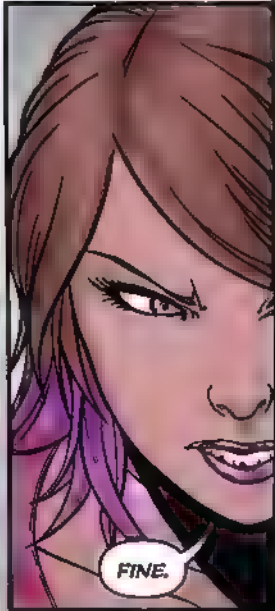
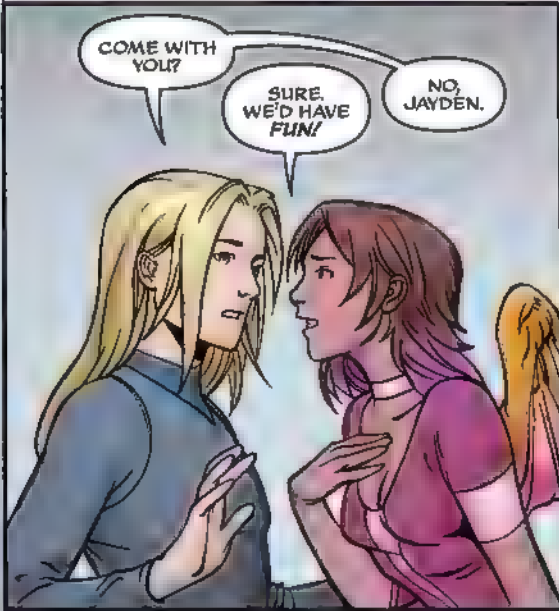
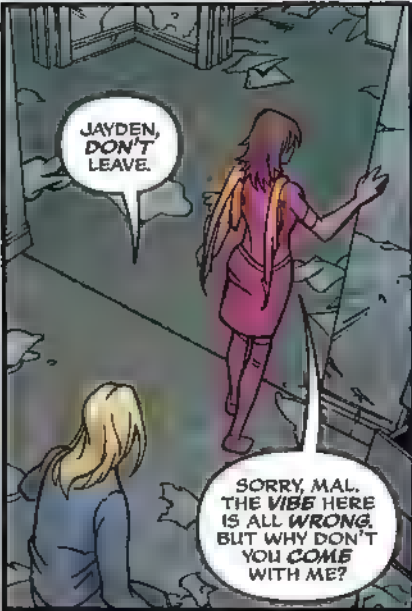
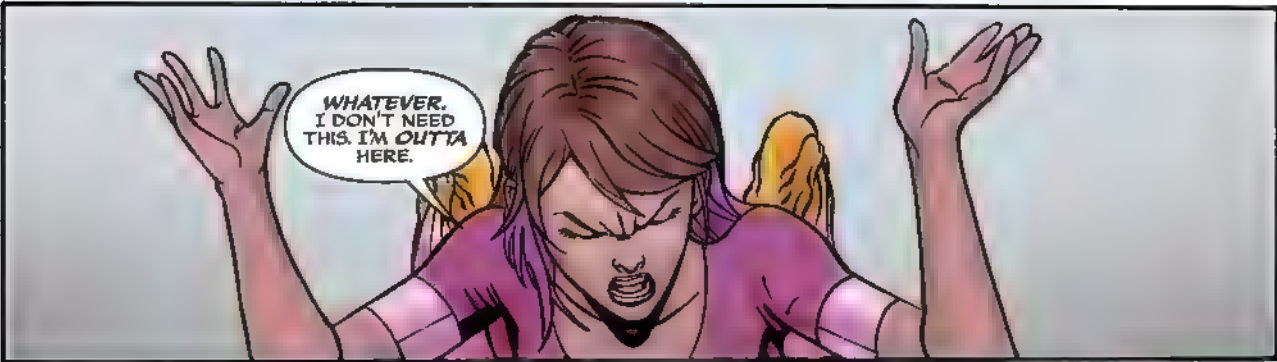
I THOUGHT AT LEAST YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND, MAL. I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON MY SIDE.

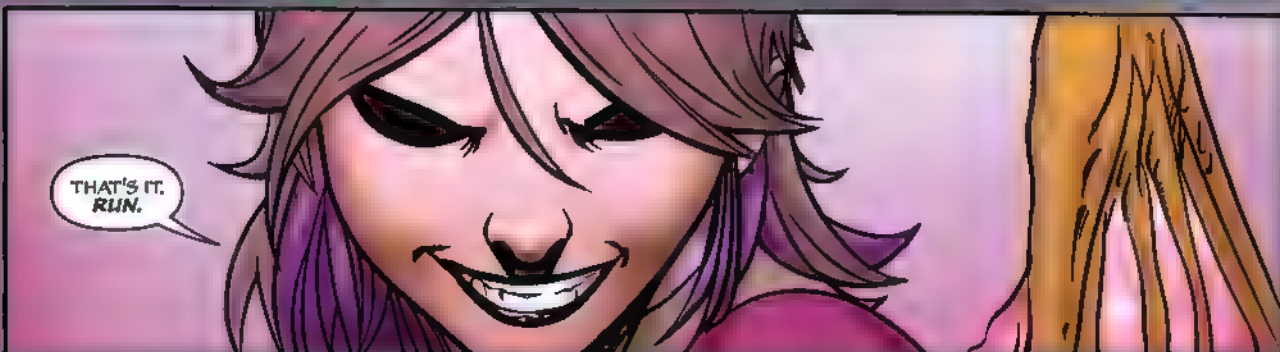
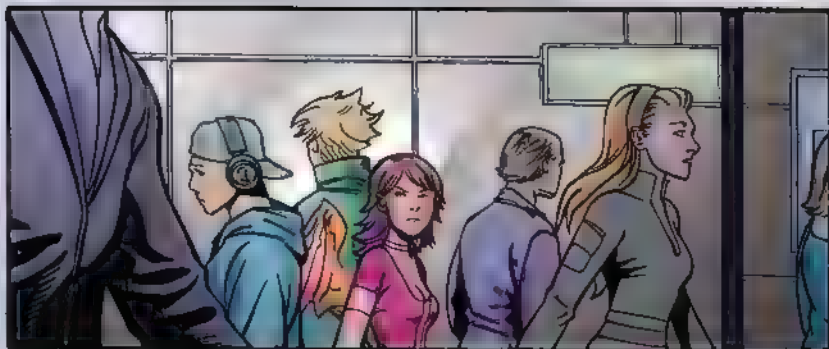
NO, JAYDEN, I DON'T. I'M NOT.



IT'S NOT ABOUT SIDES, JAYDEN.

YEAH, GIRL. WE ALL LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.









HARD TO BELIEVE THEY CAN SLEEP SO SOUNDLY.

TRUE.

WITH EVERYTHING THEY'VE BEEN THROUGH, THEY DESERVE SOME REST.



SOMETHING I DON'T GET, I UNDERSTAND WHY THE BOY IS INVOLVED AND WHY HIS FRIENDS CAME WITH HIM, BUT-- I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE?

I SEE IT, WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE OR THING I GRAB, MY BODY IS RUNNING ON BATTERIES AND CIRCUITRY ALL BECAUSE OF RAINIER.

USED TO WORK FOR HIM, UNTIL HE TRIED TO KILL ME. HE CAME DAMN CLOSE TO SUCCEEDING TOO. LUCKY I HAD MY OWN GUARDIAN ANGEL LURKING IN THE SHADOWS. SAVED MY LIFE AND BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE BRINK.



WHAT ABOUT YOU? THIS AIN'T JUST ABOUT THE DRAGONS, THE WAY GRACE EXPLAINS IT-- THE SKIES GONNA BE FULL OF THEM BEFORE TOO LONG.

I WALKED AWAY FROM THE WORLD OF MAGIC A LONG TIME AGO-- LEFT SOMEONE SPECIAL BEHIND TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT FOR ALL OF US.

GUESS YOU COULD SAY I WANT TO DO MY PART-- HOWEVER SMALL THAT MAY BE. MAYBE SHOW FAYE THAT I'M NOT A TOTAL ASS.



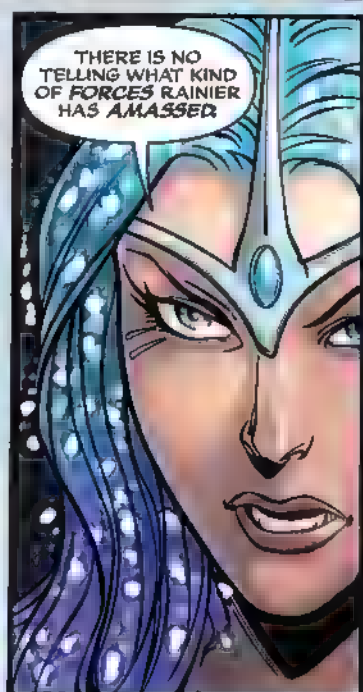
AND I KNOW RAINIER, TOO, HE'S BEEN A PRICK FOR CENTURIES.



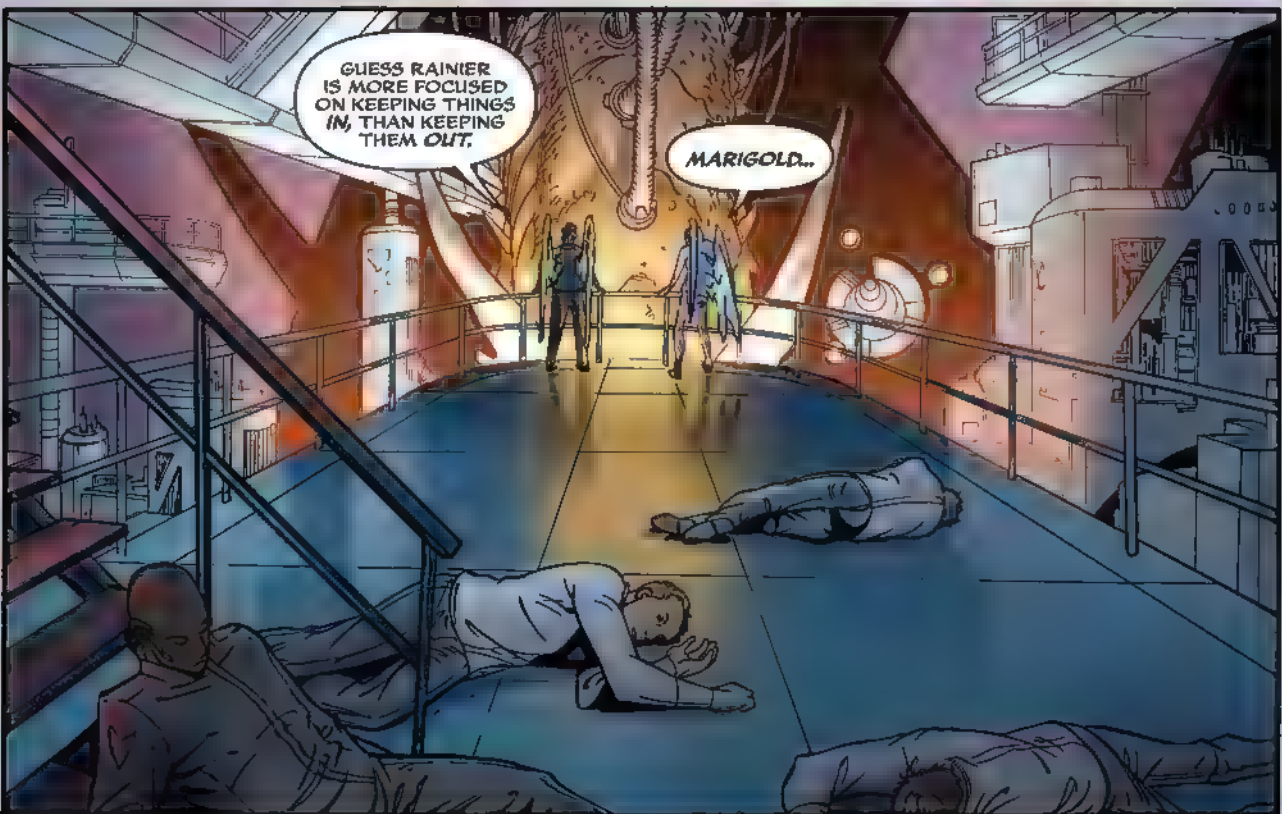
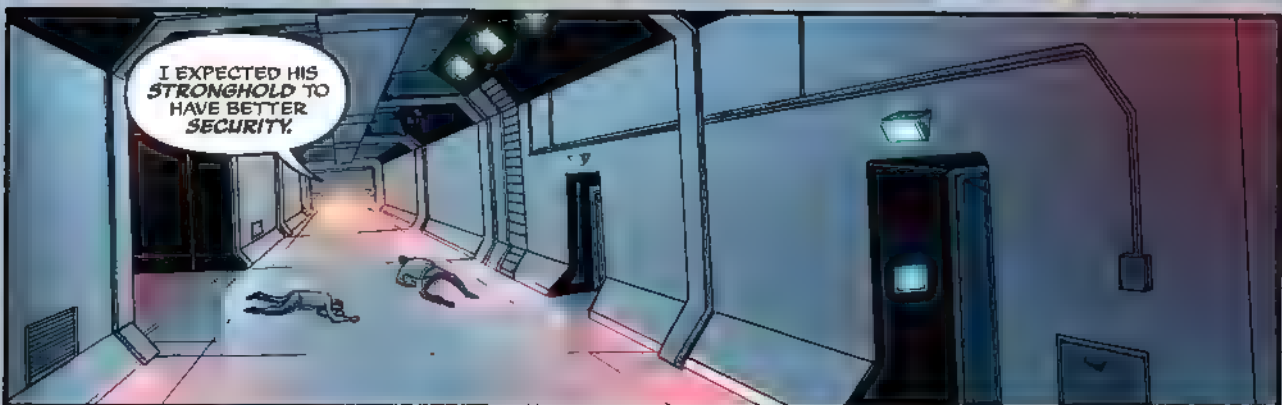
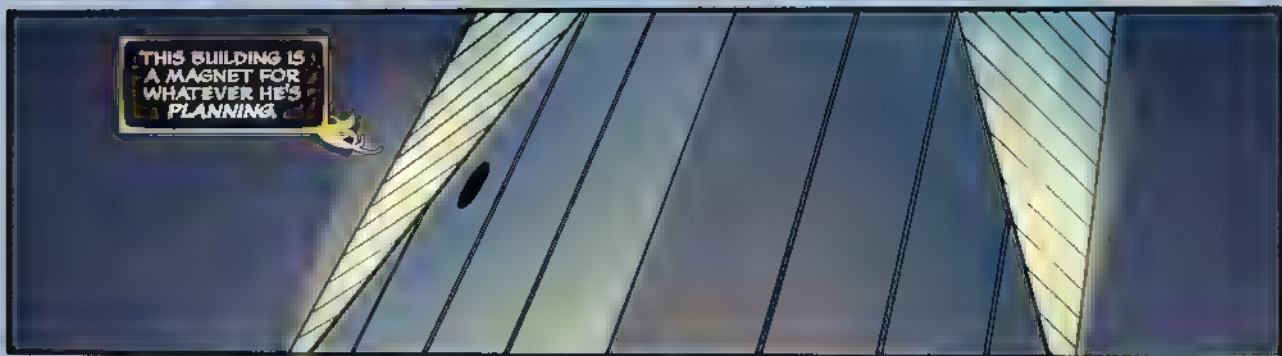
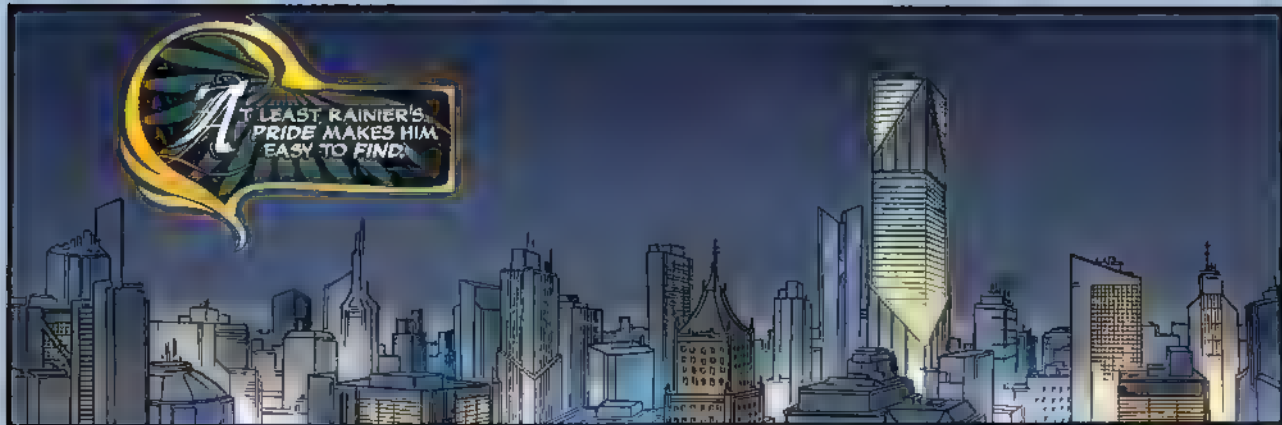
BENOIST, DEX AND I ARE GOING TO SEARCH FOR MARISOLD.

WAIT-- THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A TEAM EFFORT.

AND IT WILL BE WHEN THE TIME COMES, BUT I WILL NOT GO INTO BATTLE BLINDLY. WE MUST KNOW WHAT WE ARE GOING UP AGAINST.



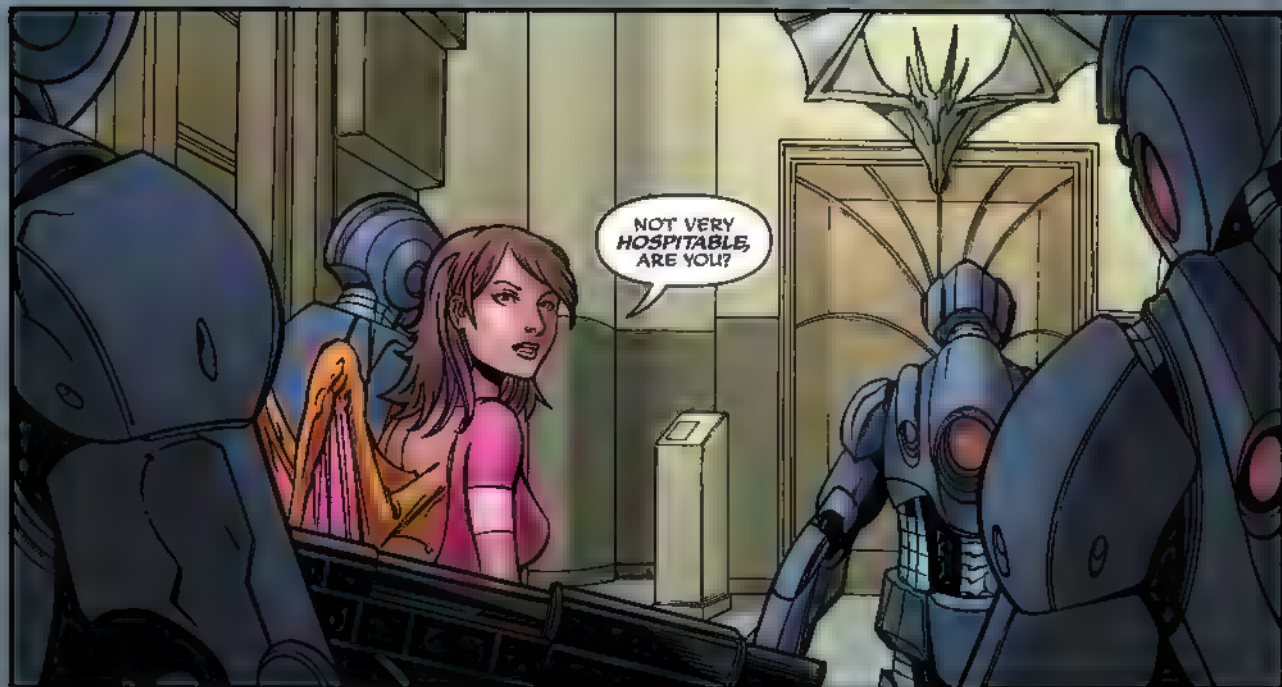
THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT KIND OF FORCES RAINIER HAS AMASSED.

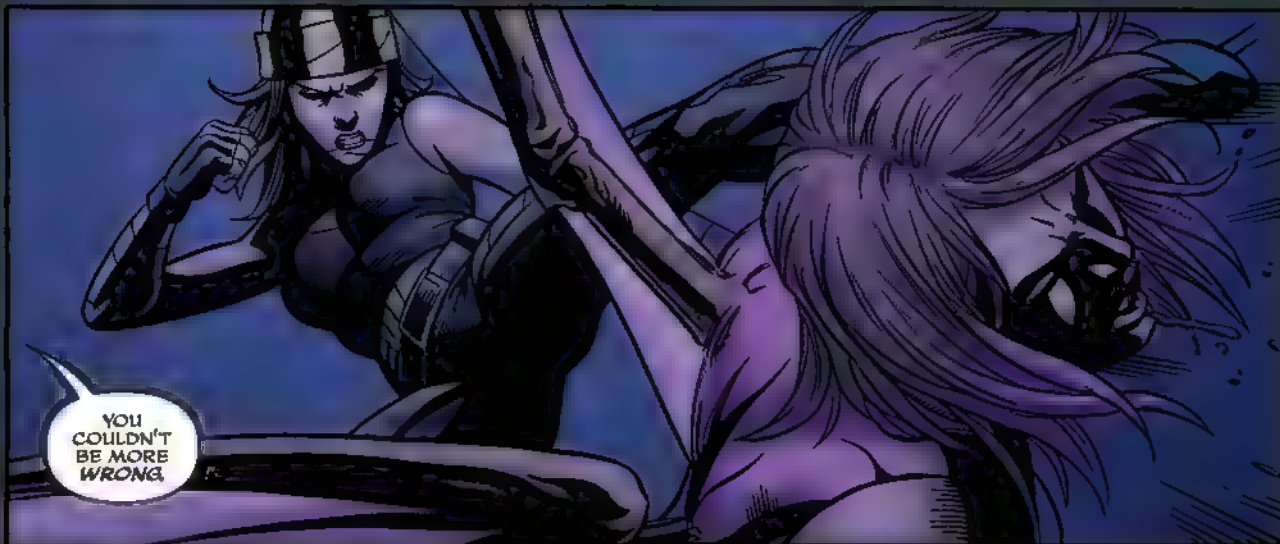
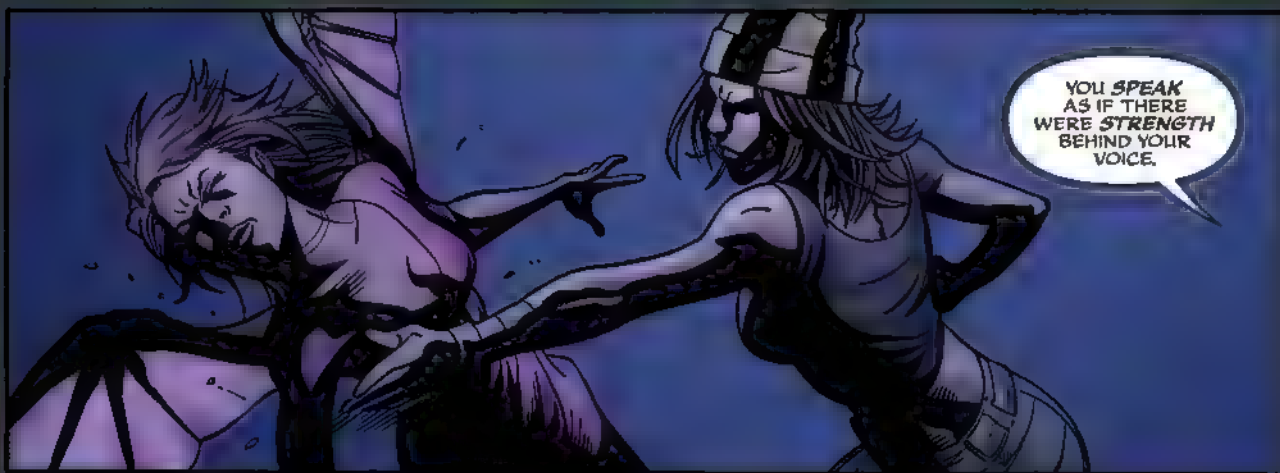
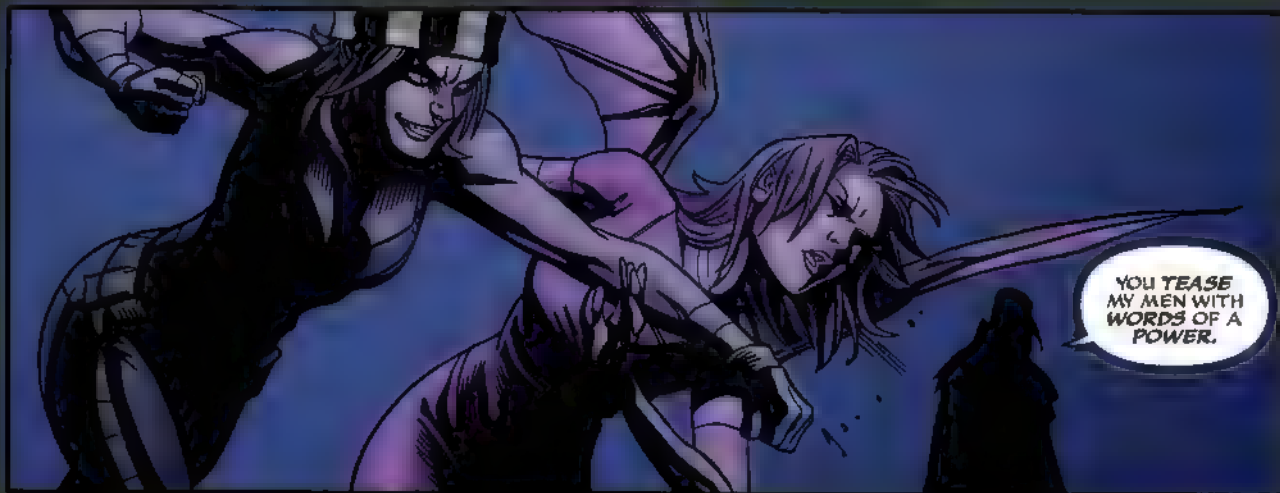




NO...

...WHAT
HAS RAINIER
DONE TO
YOU?

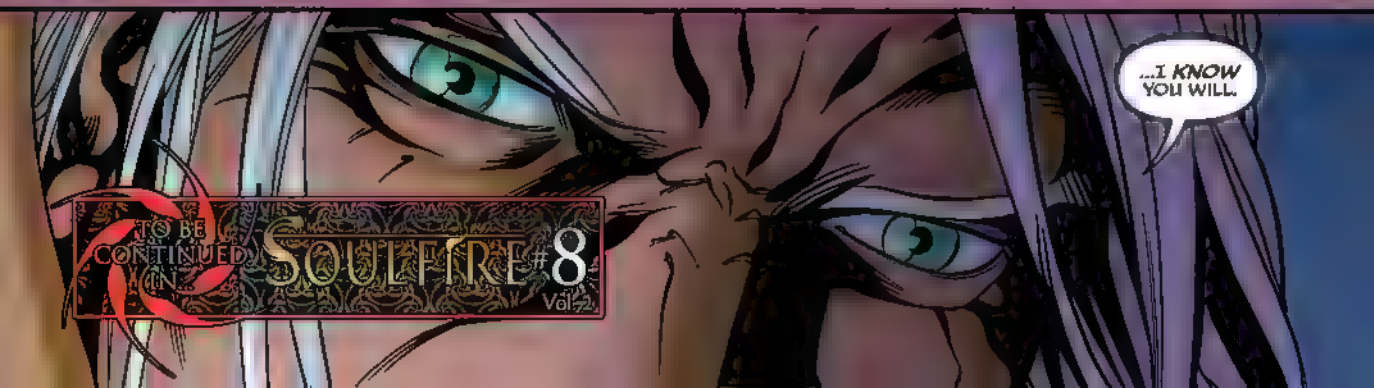






WAIT! I'LL TELL
YOU I'LL TELL YOU
EVERYTHING!

YES...



...I KNOW
YOU WILL.

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#8

OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL FORNERS
SOULFIRE™



SOTELLO

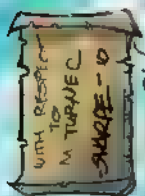


Vol. 2

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COVER B

SMITH & WORTH'S SOULFIRE™



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE EIGHT OF NINE

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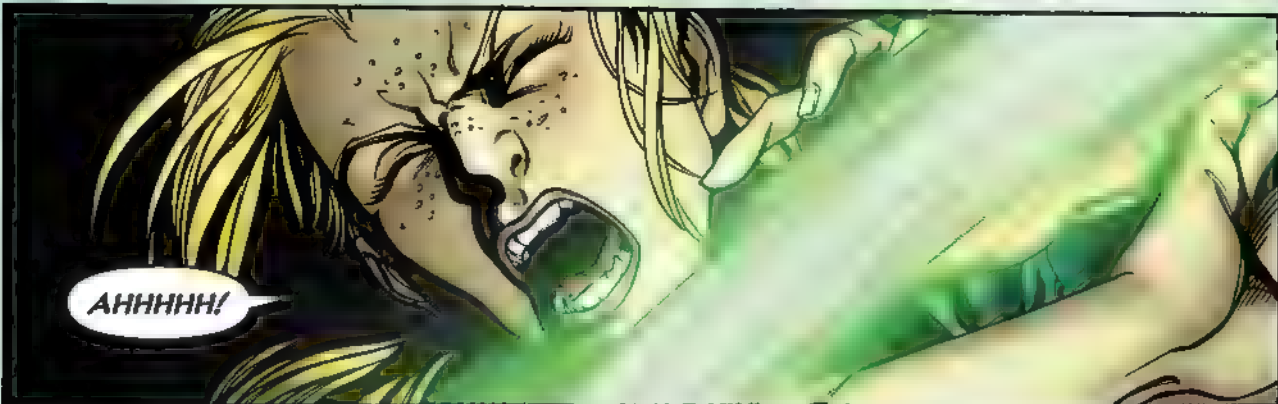
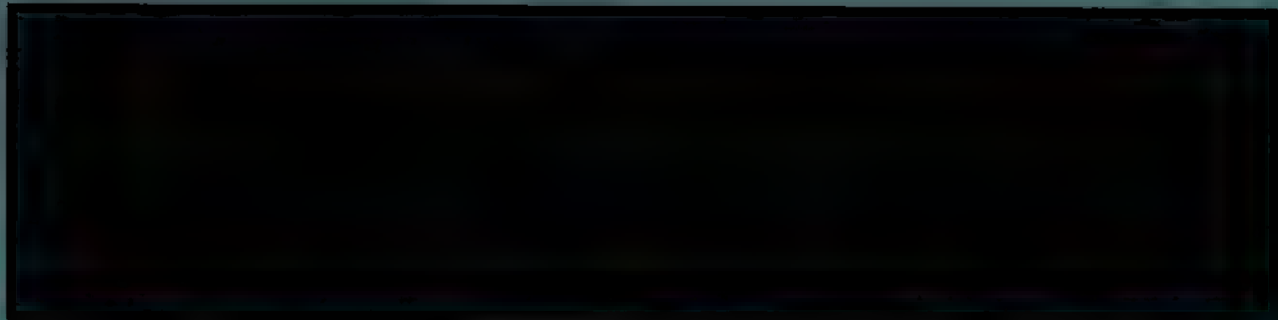
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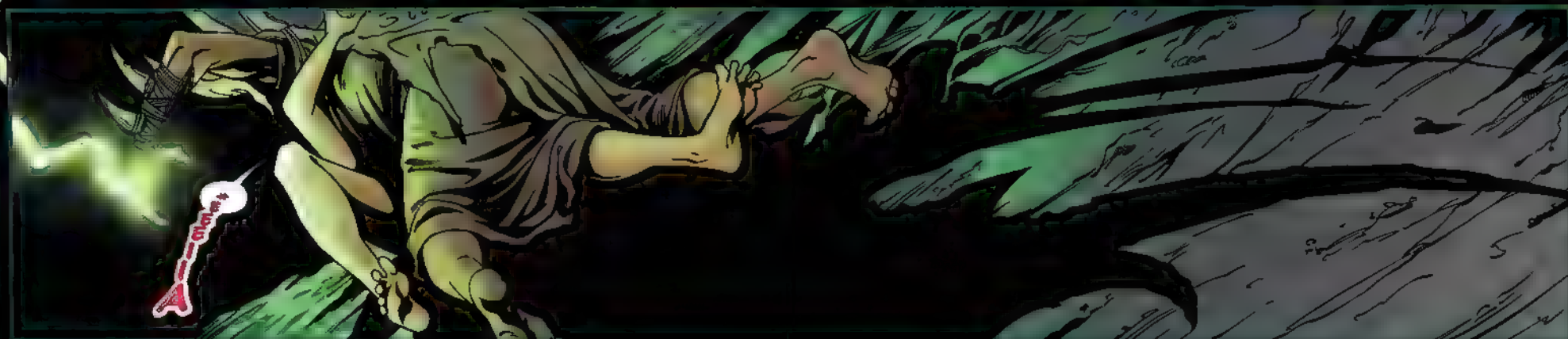
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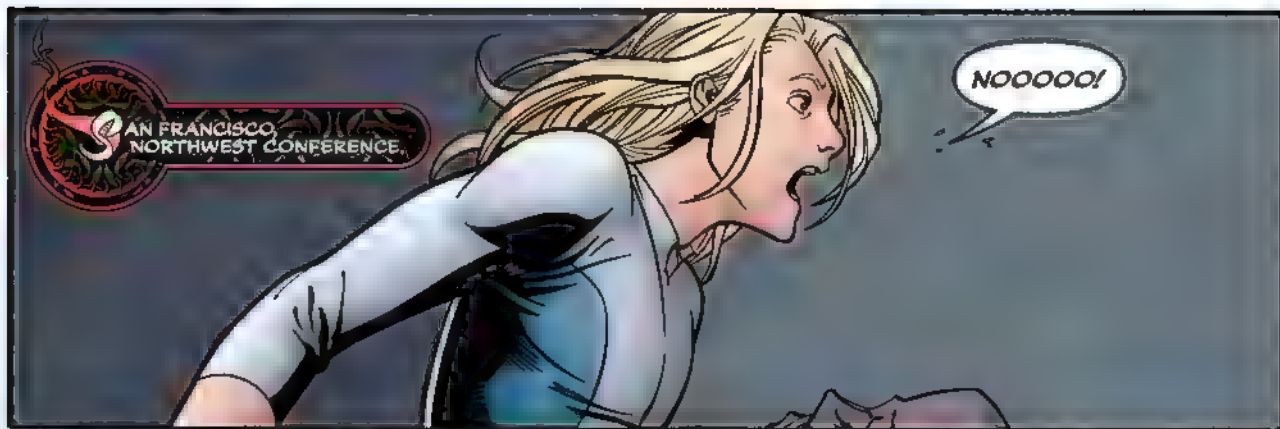
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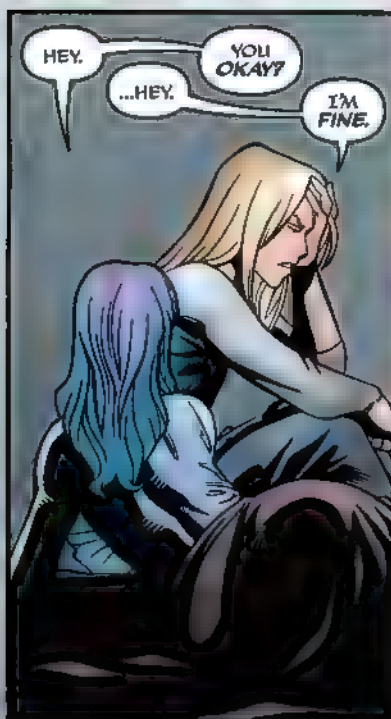
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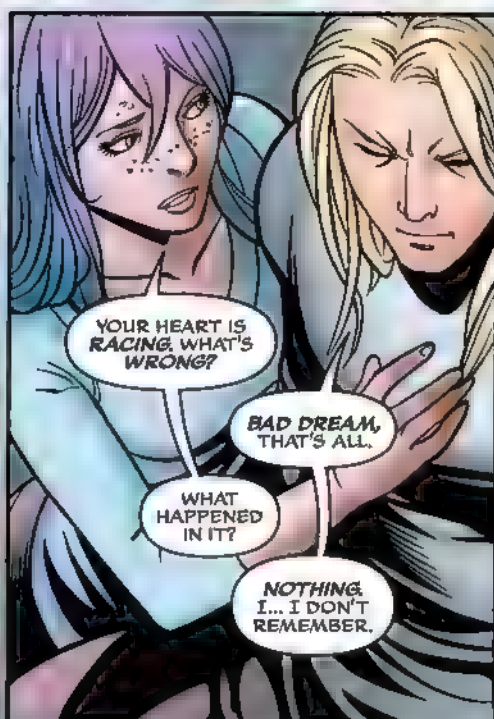


HEY.

YOU
OKAY?

...HEY.

I'M
FINE.

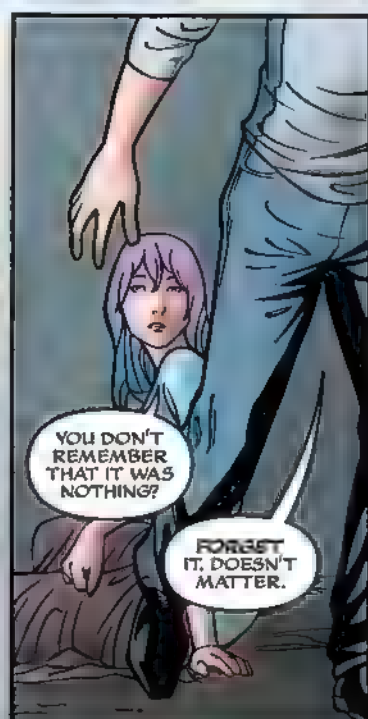


YOUR HEART IS
RACING. WHAT'S
WRONG?

BAD DREAM,
THAT'S ALL.

WHAT
HAPPENED
IN IT?

NOTHING.
I... I DON'T
REMEMBER.



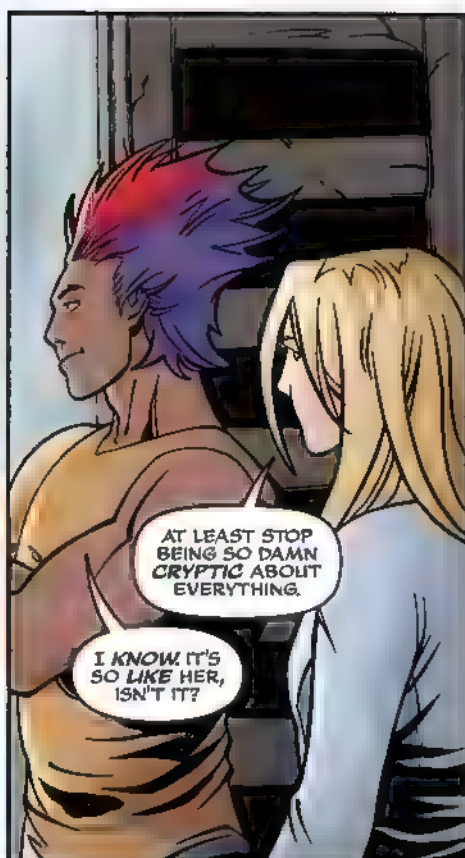
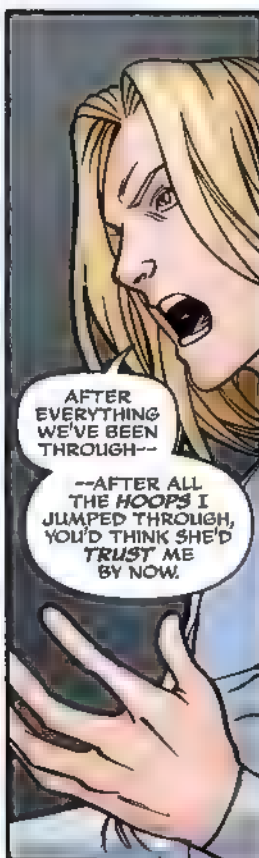
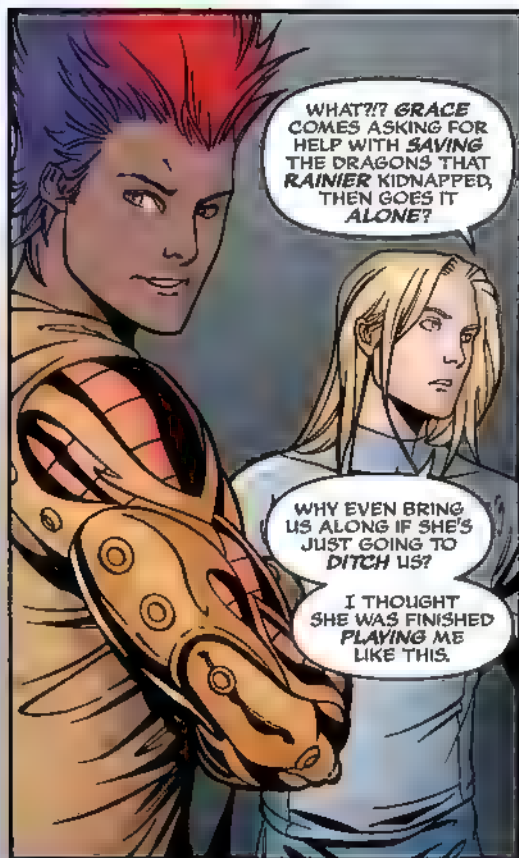
YOU DON'T
REMEMBER
THAT IT WAS
NOTHING?

FORGET
IT. DOESN'T
MATTER.



WHERE IS
EVERYBODY?

GRACE AND
DEX
TOOK OFF.
WENT LOOKING FOR
THE DRAGONS.



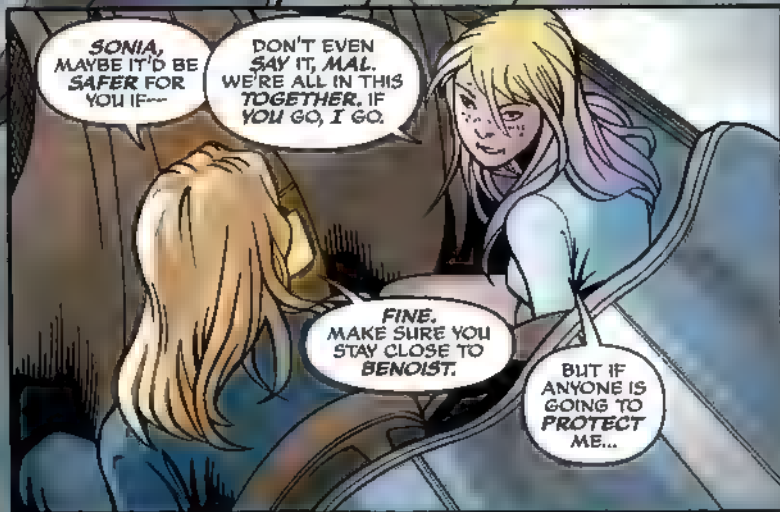


...AND
THERE SHE
IS. WHAT A
BEAUTY



WHERE'D
YOU FIND THIS
THING???

SAN FRAN
IS MY STOMPING
GROUND, REMEMBER?
I GOT MY SECRET
STASH.

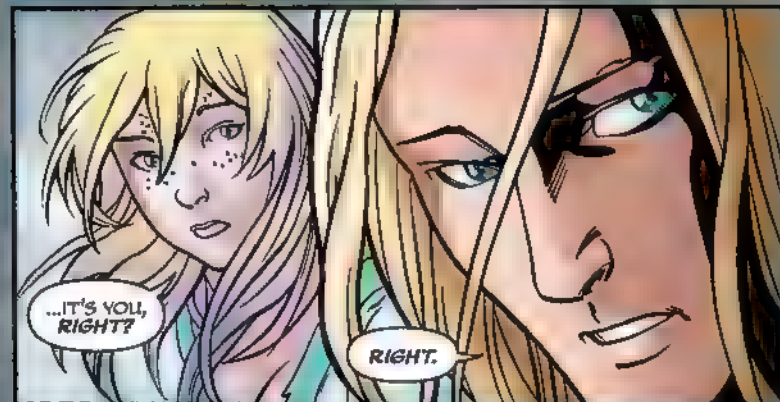


SONIA,
MAYBE IT'D BE
SAFER FOR
YOU IF---

DON'T EVEN
SAY IT, MAL.
WE'RE ALL IN THIS
TOGETHER. IF
YOU GO, I GO.

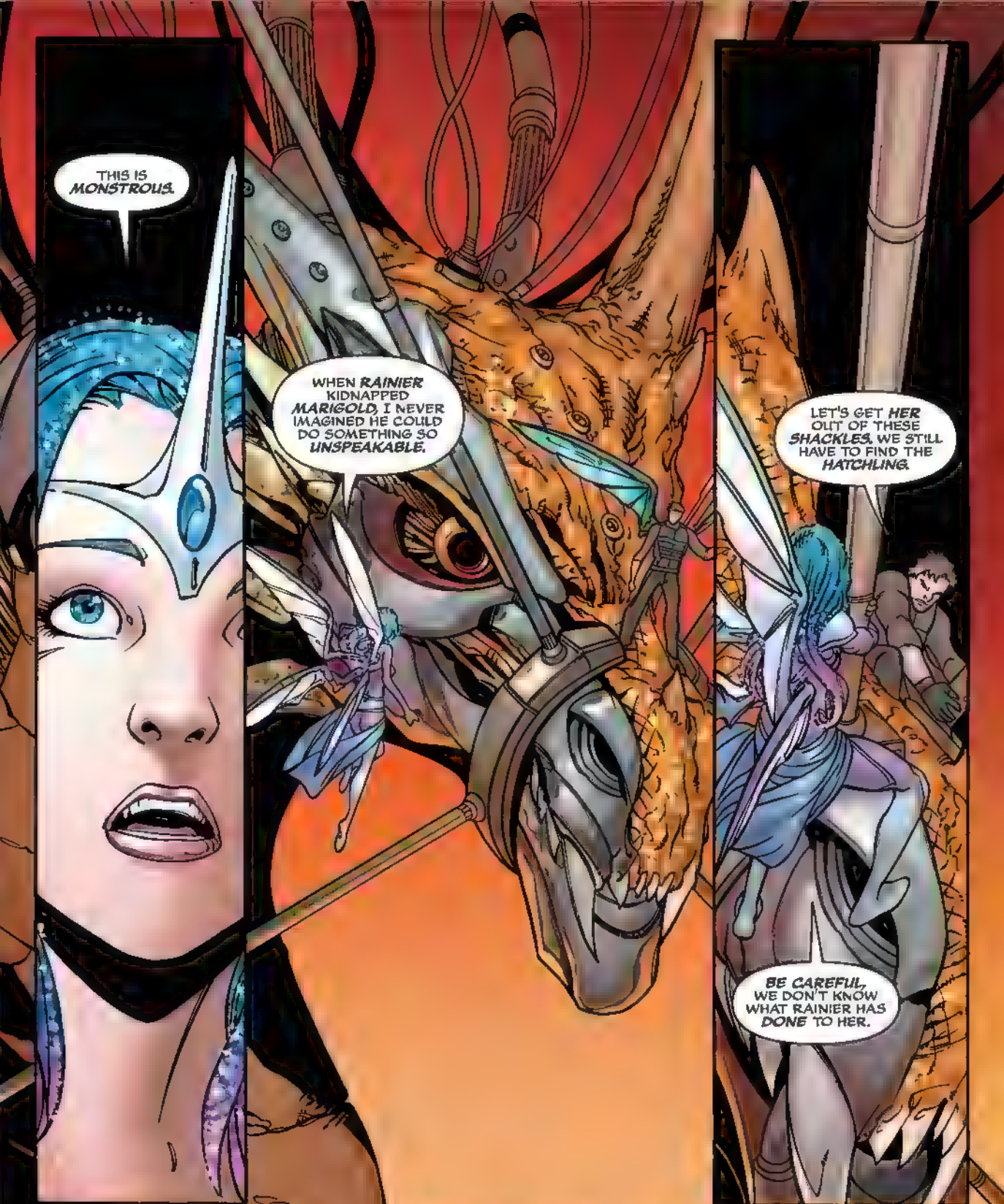
FINE.
MAKE SURE YOU
STAY CLOSE TO
BENOIST.

BUT IF
ANYONE IS
GOING TO
PROTECT
ME...



...IT'S YOU,
RIGHT?

RIGHT.

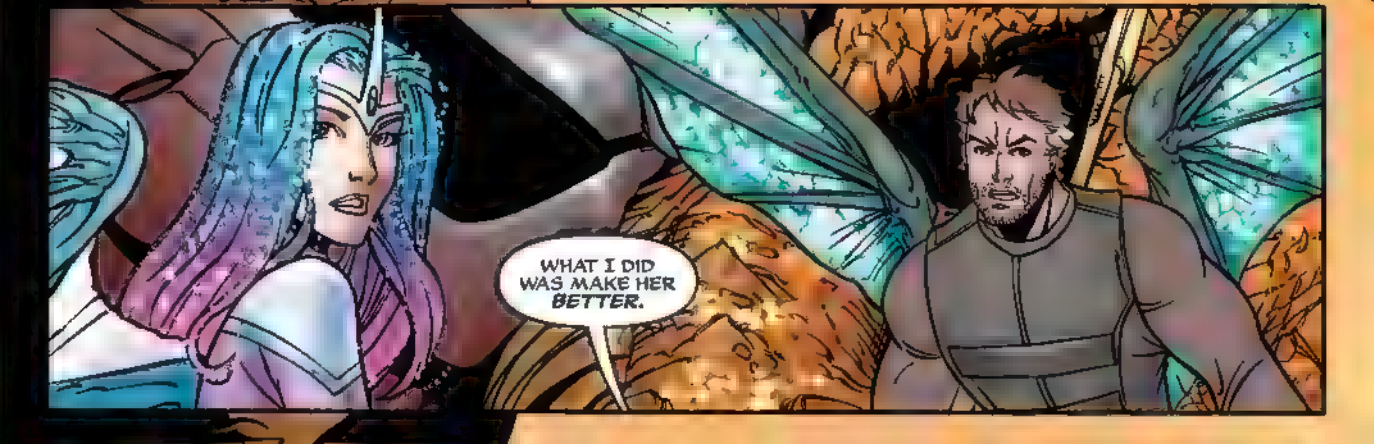


THIS IS
MONSTROUS.

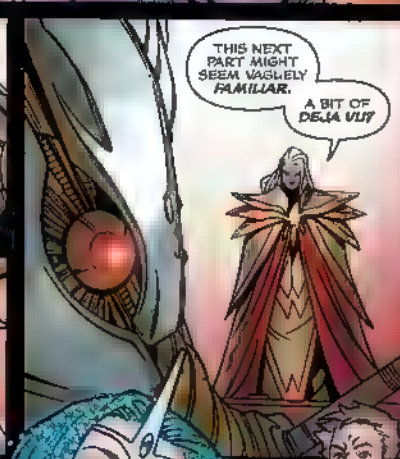
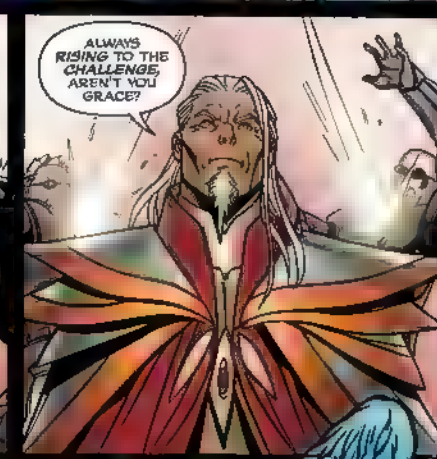
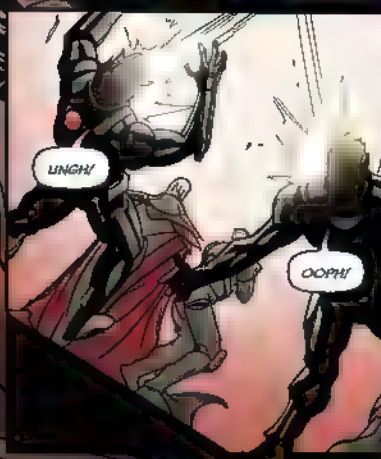
WHEN RAINIER
KIDNAPPED
MARIGOLD, I NEVER
IMAGINED HE COULD
DO SOMETHING SO
UNSPEAKABLE.

LET'S GET HER
OUT OF THESE
SHACKLES. WE STILL
HAVE TO FIND THE
HATCHLING.

BE CAREFUL,
WE DON'T KNOW
WHAT RAINIER HAS
DONE TO HER.

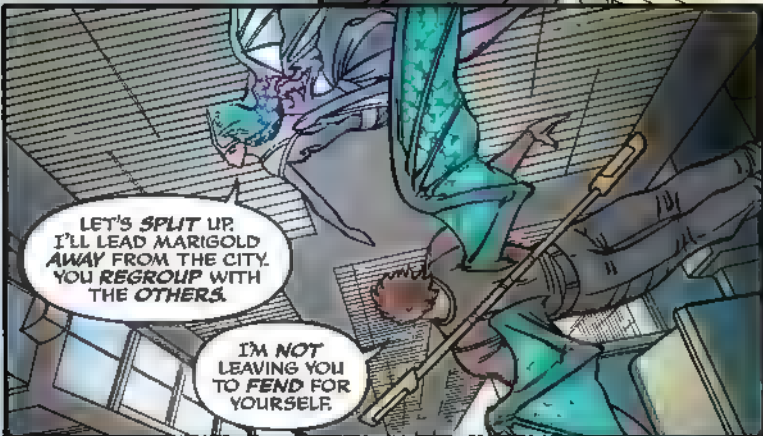
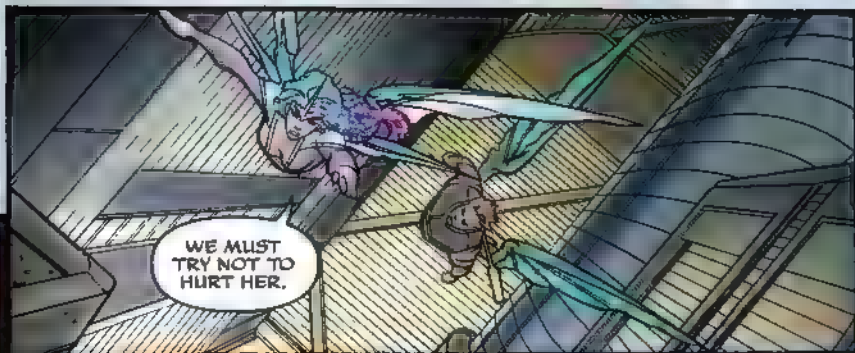
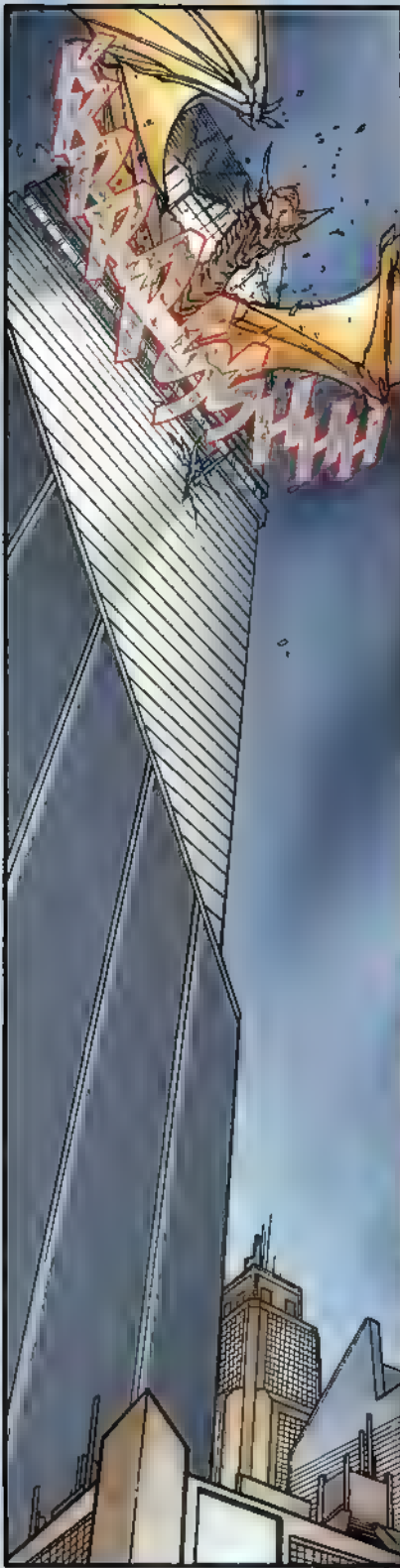


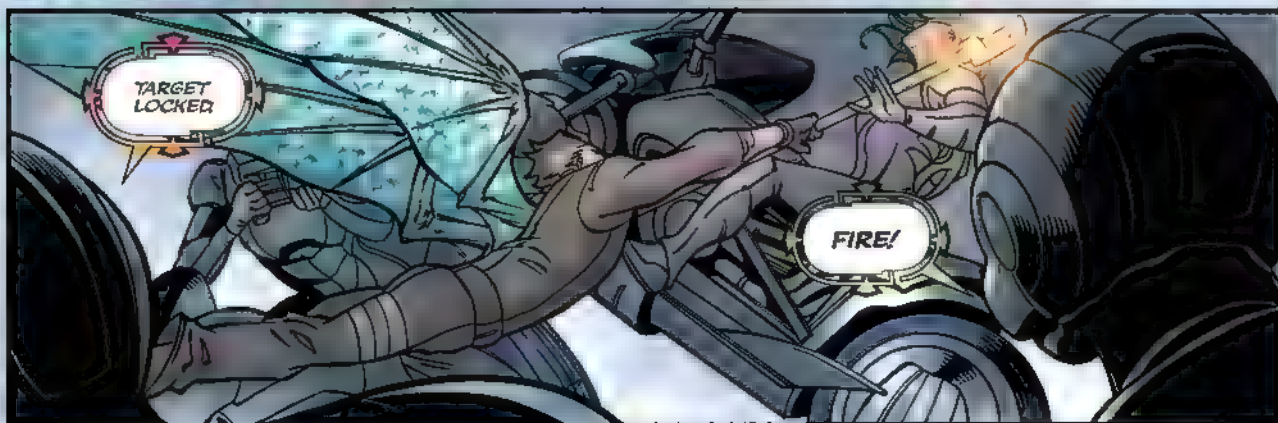
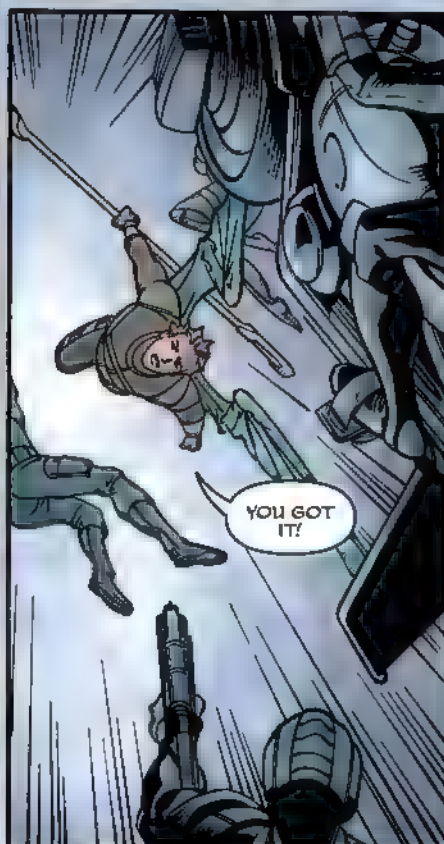
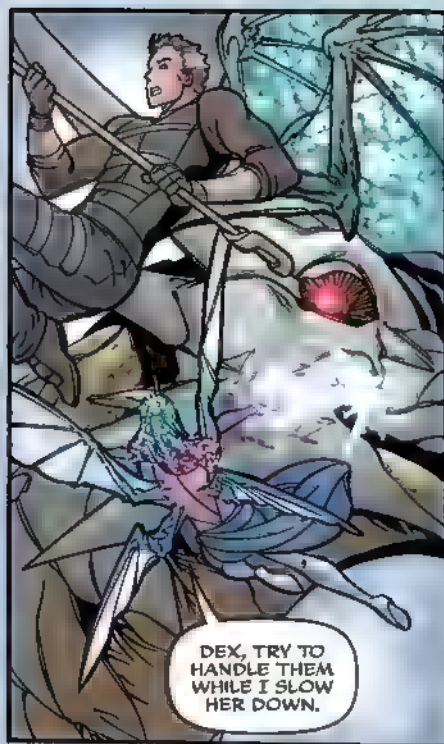
WHAT I DID
WAS MAKE HER
BETTER.





POW
AA
R





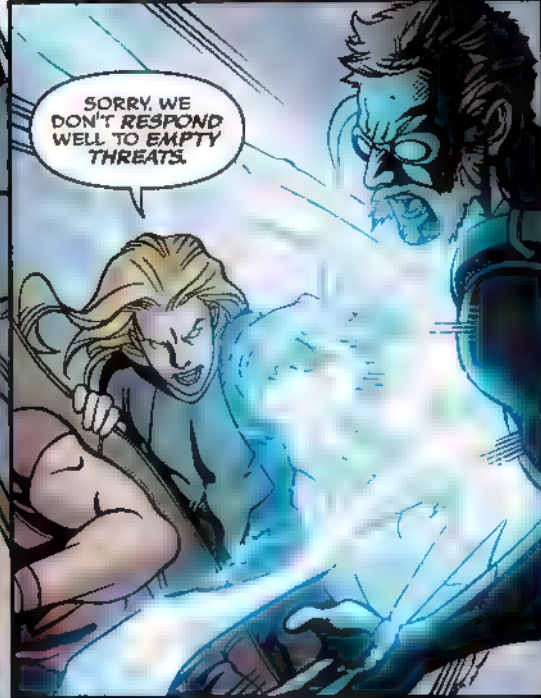


NEXT
TIME, THINK
TWICE ABOUT
DITCHING
US.

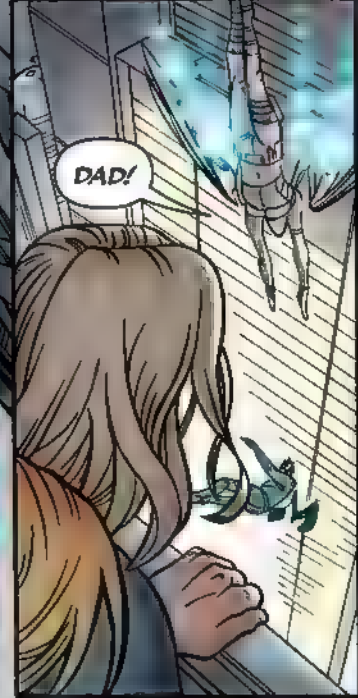
DEAL,
BENOIST.



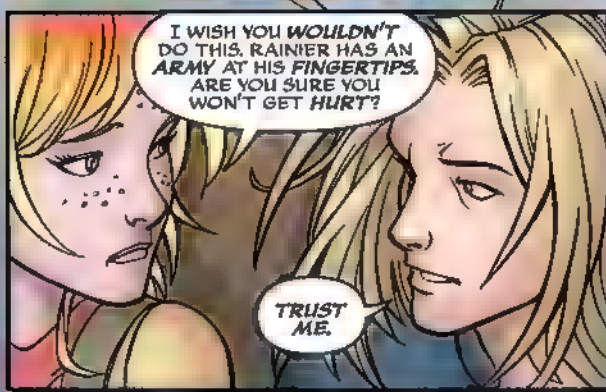
TAKE
HER DOWN,
NOW!



SORRY, WE
DON'T RESPOND
WELL TO EMPTY
THREATS.

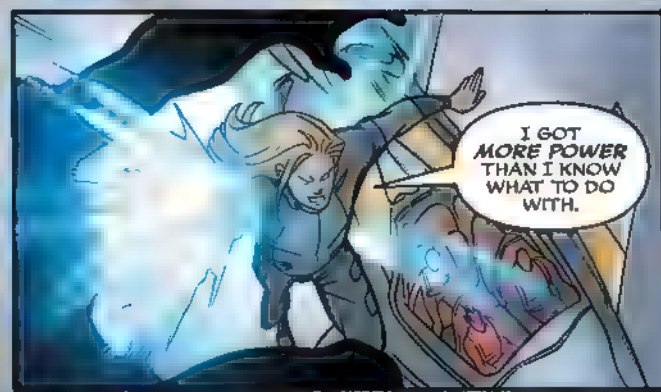


DAD!

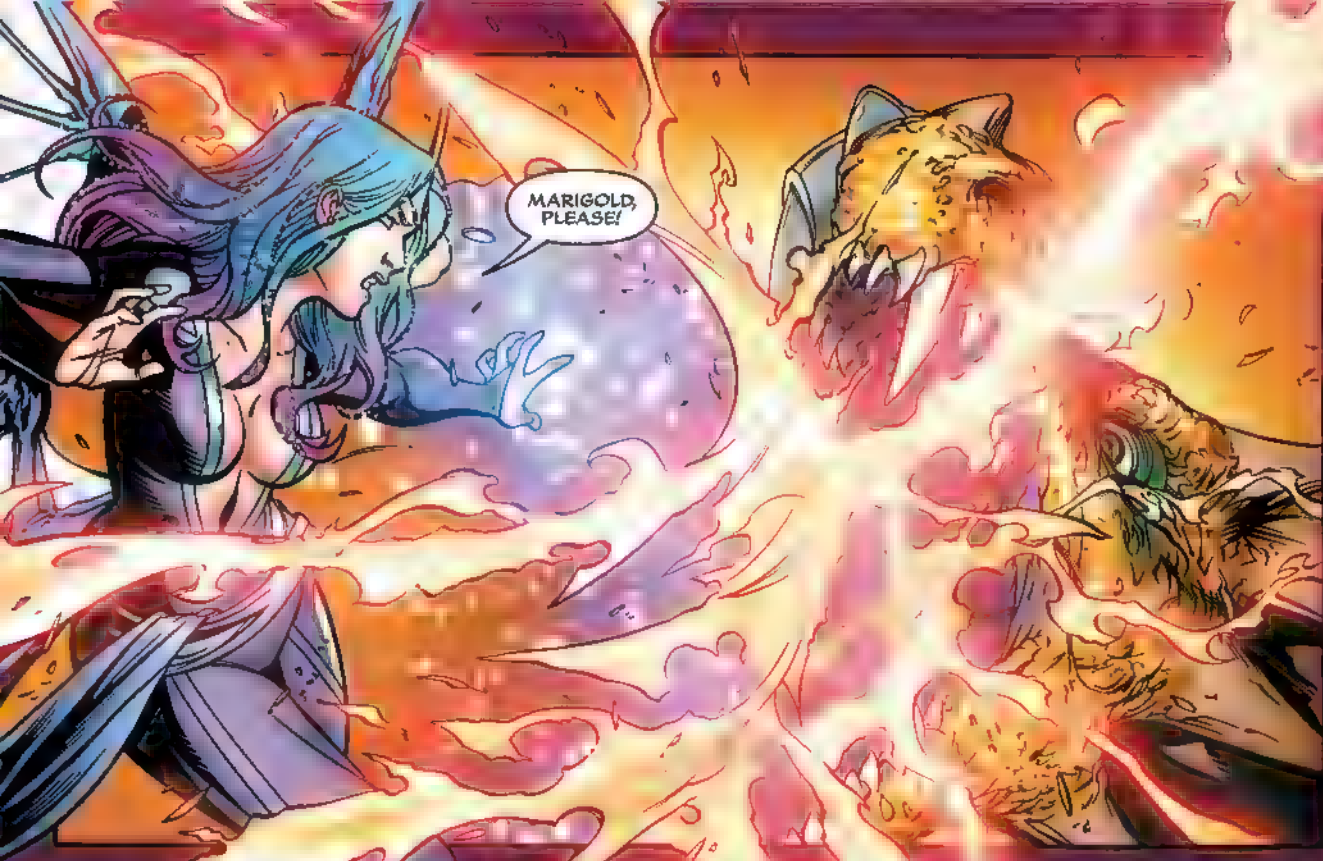


I WISH YOU WOULDN'T
DO THIS. RAINIER HAS AN
ARMY AT HIS FINGERTIPS.
ARE YOU SURE YOU
WON'T GET HURT?

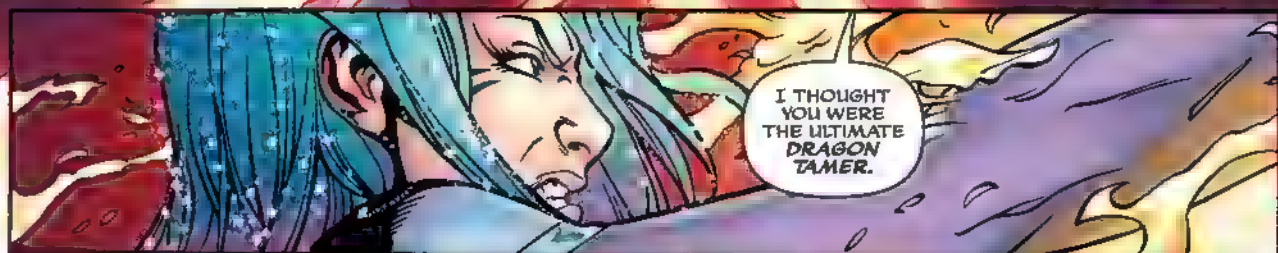
TRUST
ME.



I GOT
MORE POWER
THAN I KNOW
WHAT TO DO
WITH.



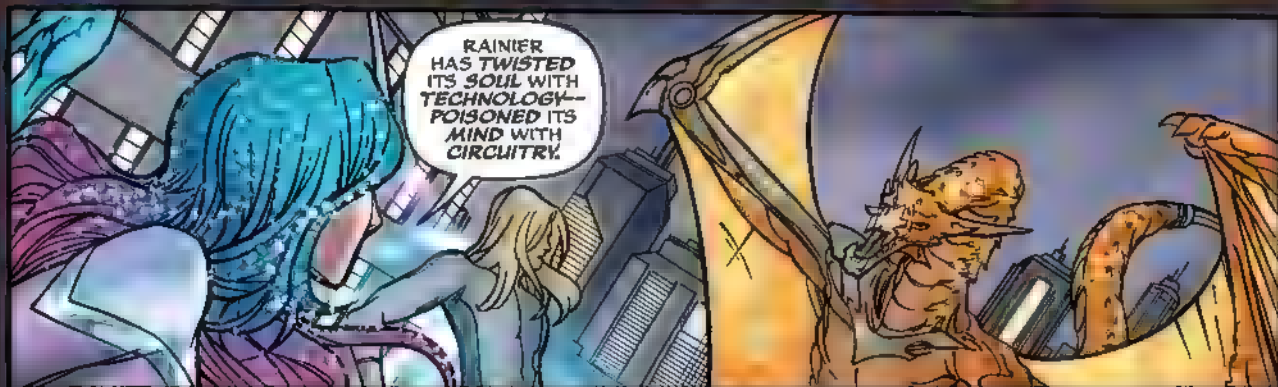
MARIGOLD,
PLEASE!



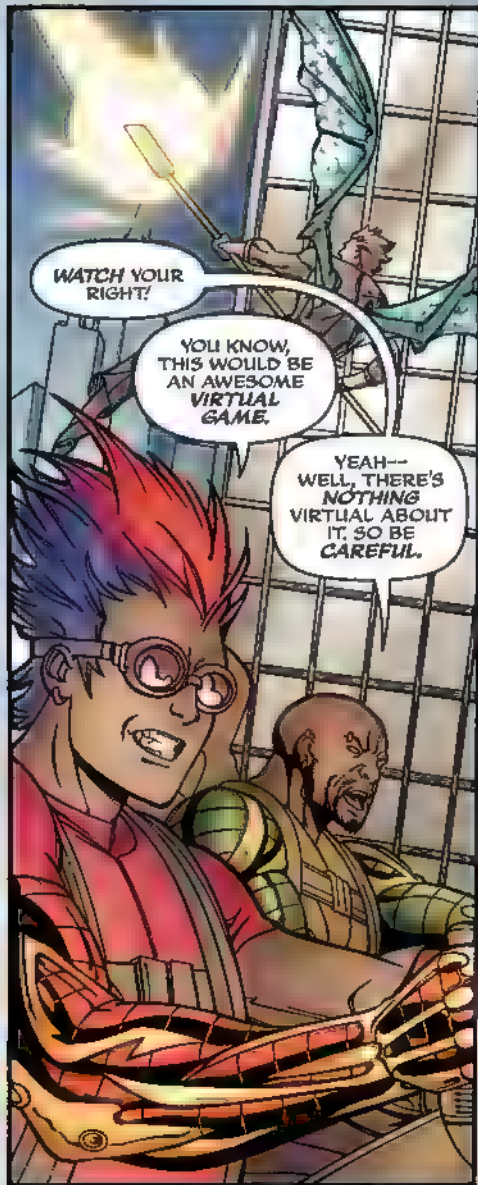
I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
THE ULTIMATE
DRAGON
TAMER.



THIS ONE SEEMS
IMMUNE TO
YOUR CHARM.



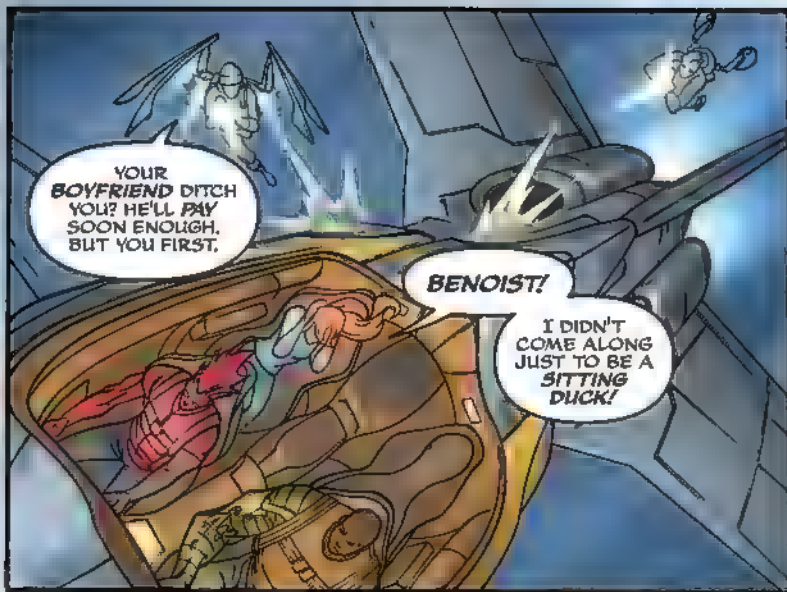
RAINIER
HAS TWISTED
ITS SOUL WITH
TECHNOLOGY--
POISONED ITS
MIND WITH
CIRCUITRY.



WATCH YOUR RIGHT!

YOU KNOW, THIS WOULD BE AN AWESOME VIRTUAL GAME.

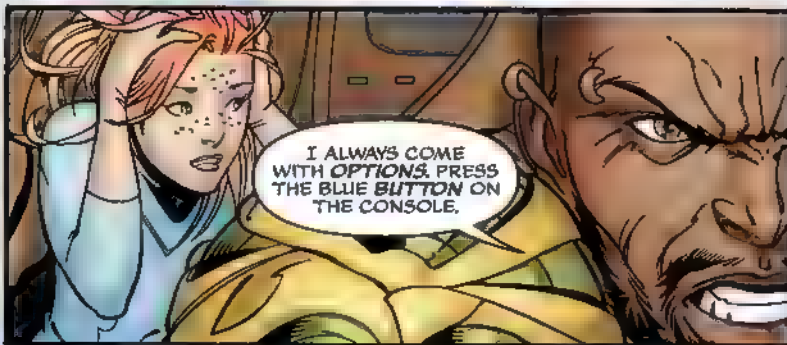
YEAH— WELL, THERE'S **NOTHING** VIRTUAL ABOUT IT. SO BE CAREFUL.



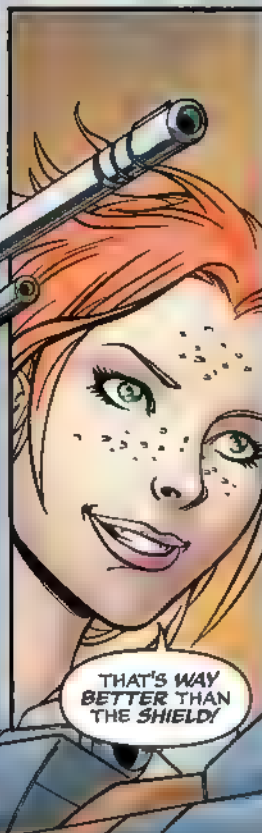
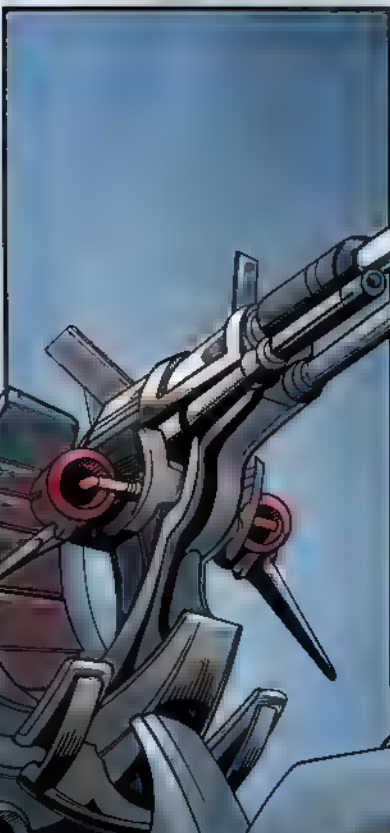
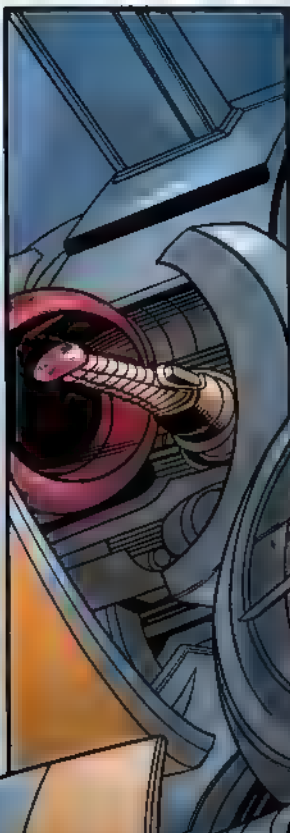
YOUR **BOYFRIEND** DITCH YOU? HE'LL PAY SOON ENOUGH. BUT YOU FIRST.

BENOIST!

I DIDN'T COME ALONG JUST TO BE A **SITTING DUCK!**



I ALWAYS COME WITH **OPTIONS**. PRESS THE **BLUE BUTTON** ON THE **CONSOLE**.



THAT'S WAY BETTER THAN THE **SHIELD!**

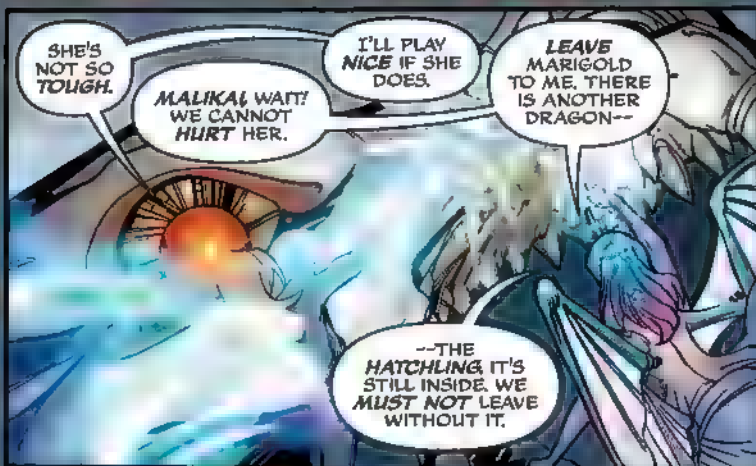


DITCH THIS!



NO FAIR! I WANT ONE OF THOSE.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAD TO CALL SHOTGUN.



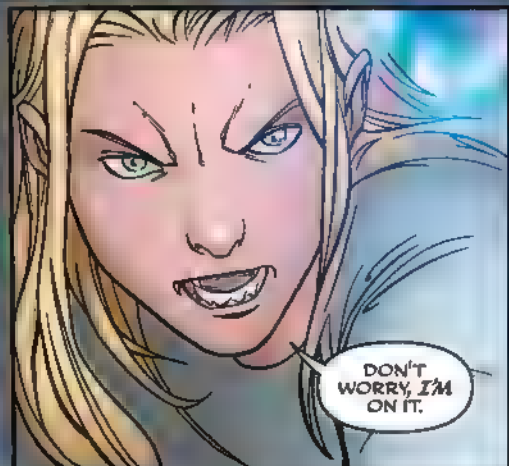
SHE'S NOT SO TOUGH.

MALIKAL WAIT! WE CANNOT HURT HER.

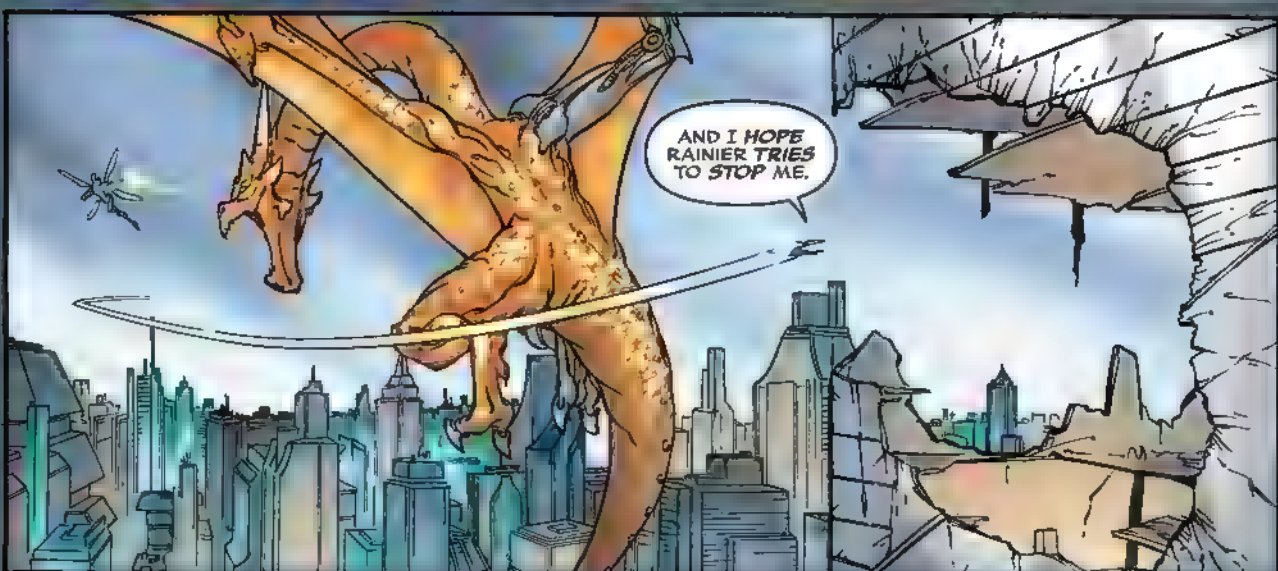
I'LL PLAY NICE IF SHE DOES.

LEAVE MARIGOLD TO ME. THERE IS ANOTHER DRAGON--

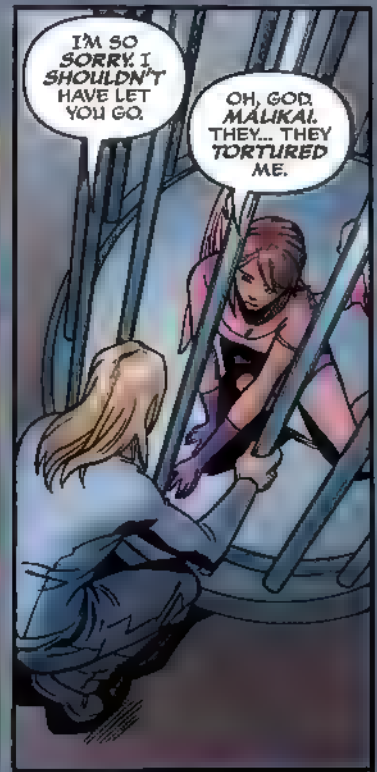
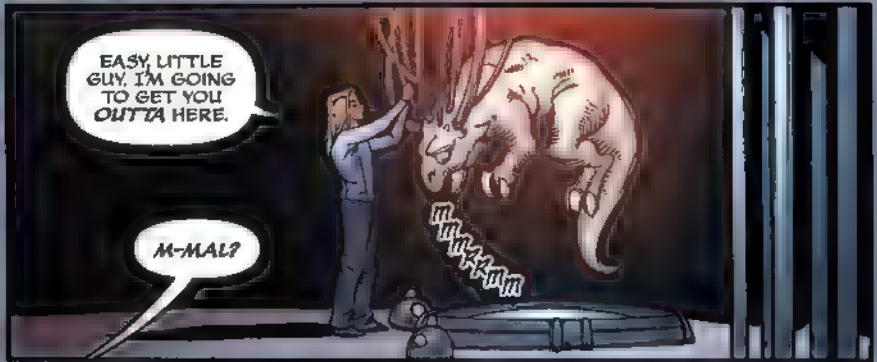
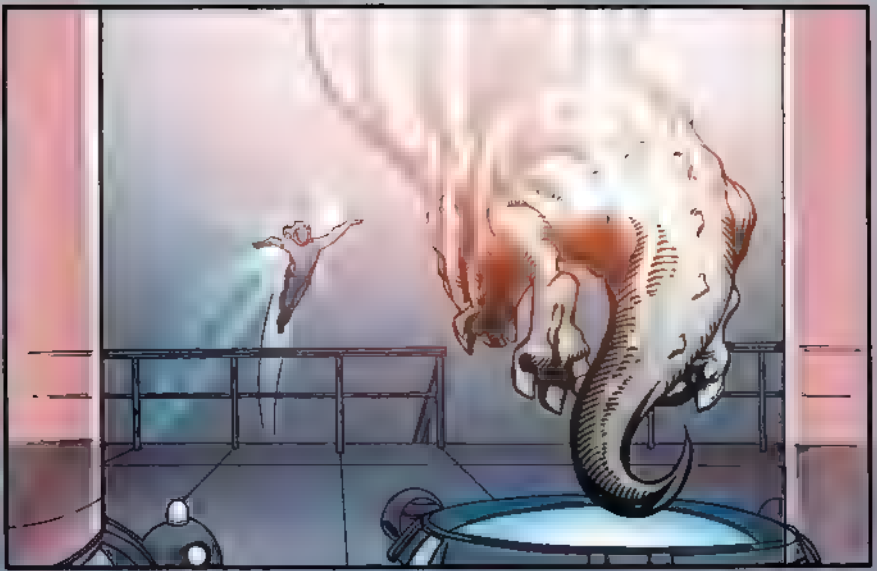
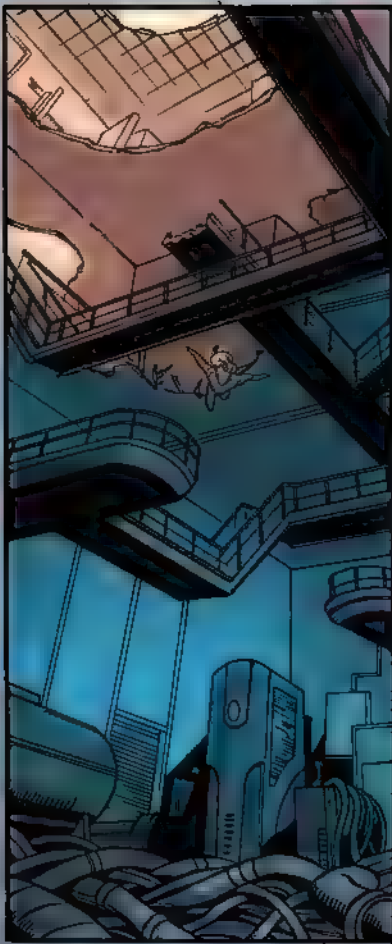
--THE HATCHLING IT'S STILL INSIDE. WE MUST NOT LEAVE WITHOUT IT.

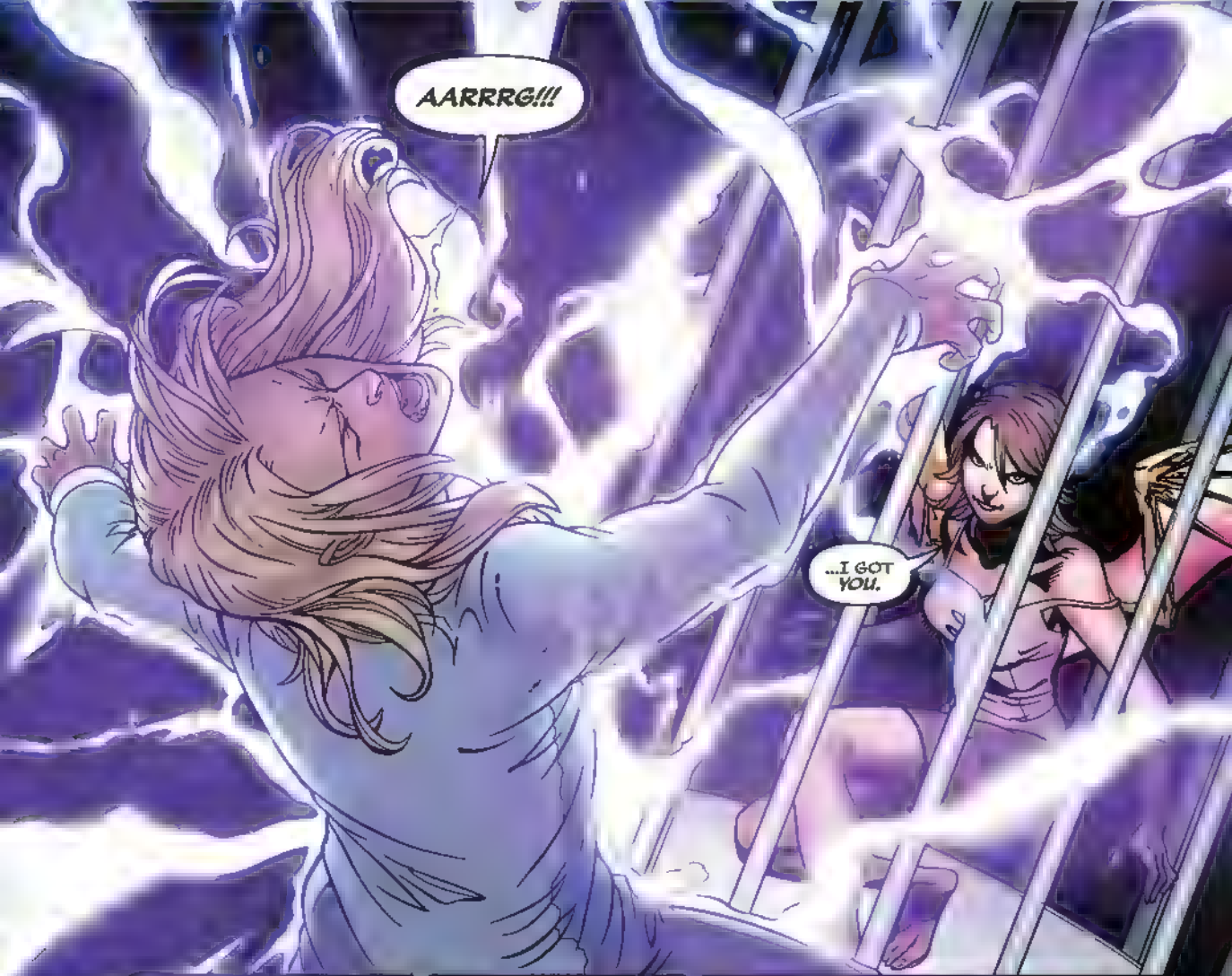


DON'T WORRY, I'M ON IT.



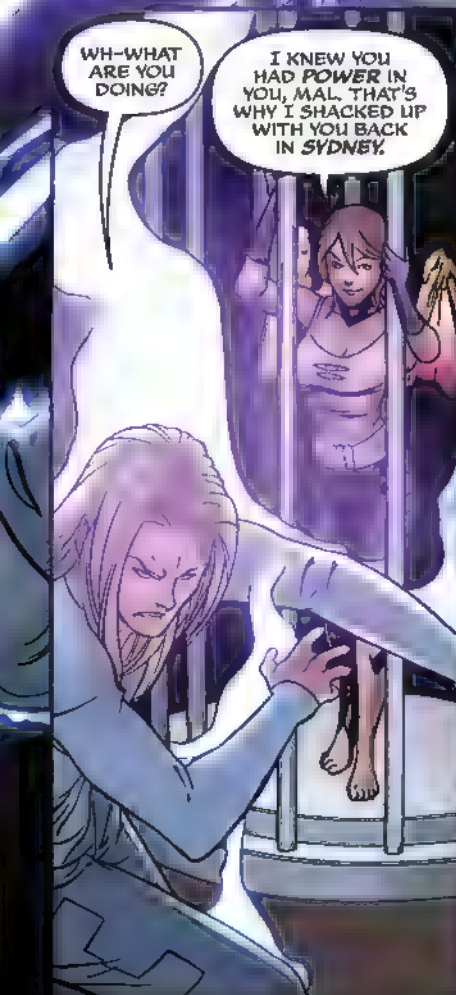
AND I HOPE RAINIER TRIES TO STOP ME.





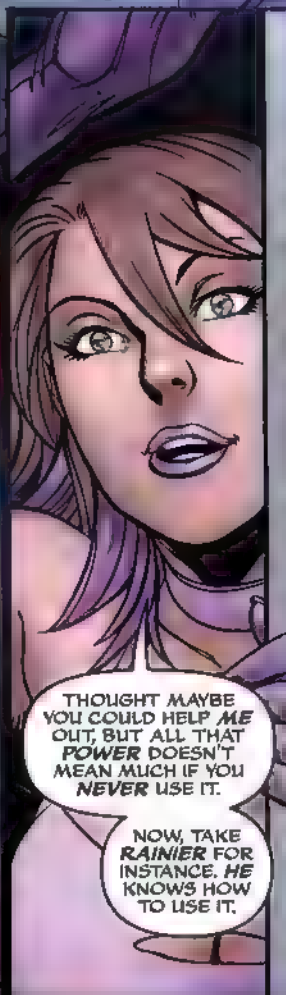
AARRRG!!!

...I GOT YOU.



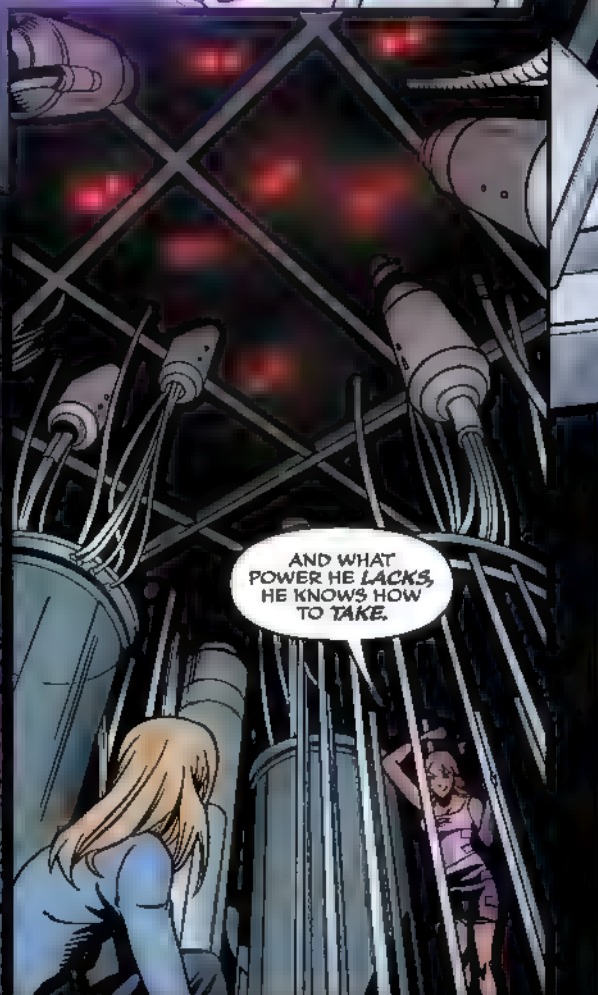
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I KNEW YOU HAD POWER IN YOU, MAL. THAT'S WHY I SHACKED UP WITH YOU BACK IN SYDNEY.



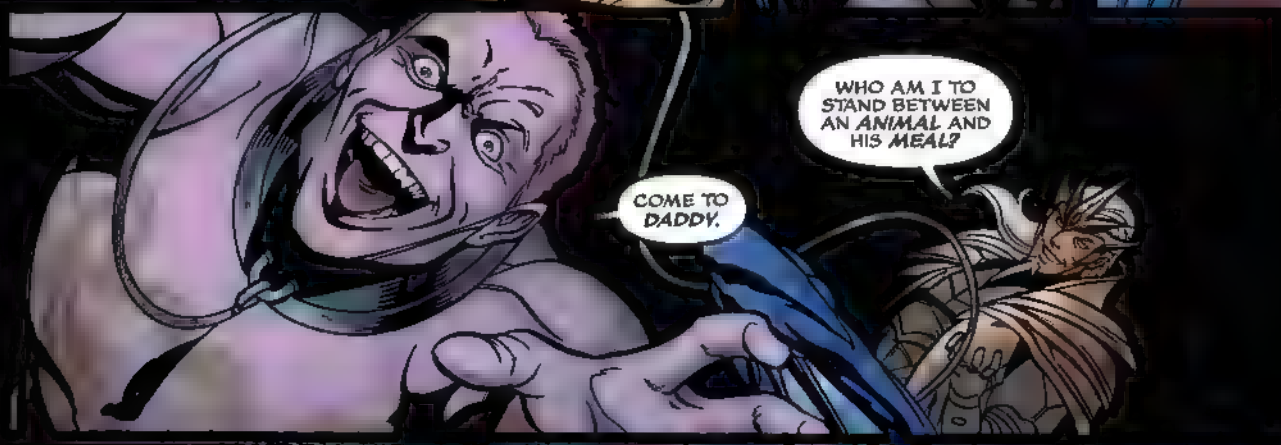
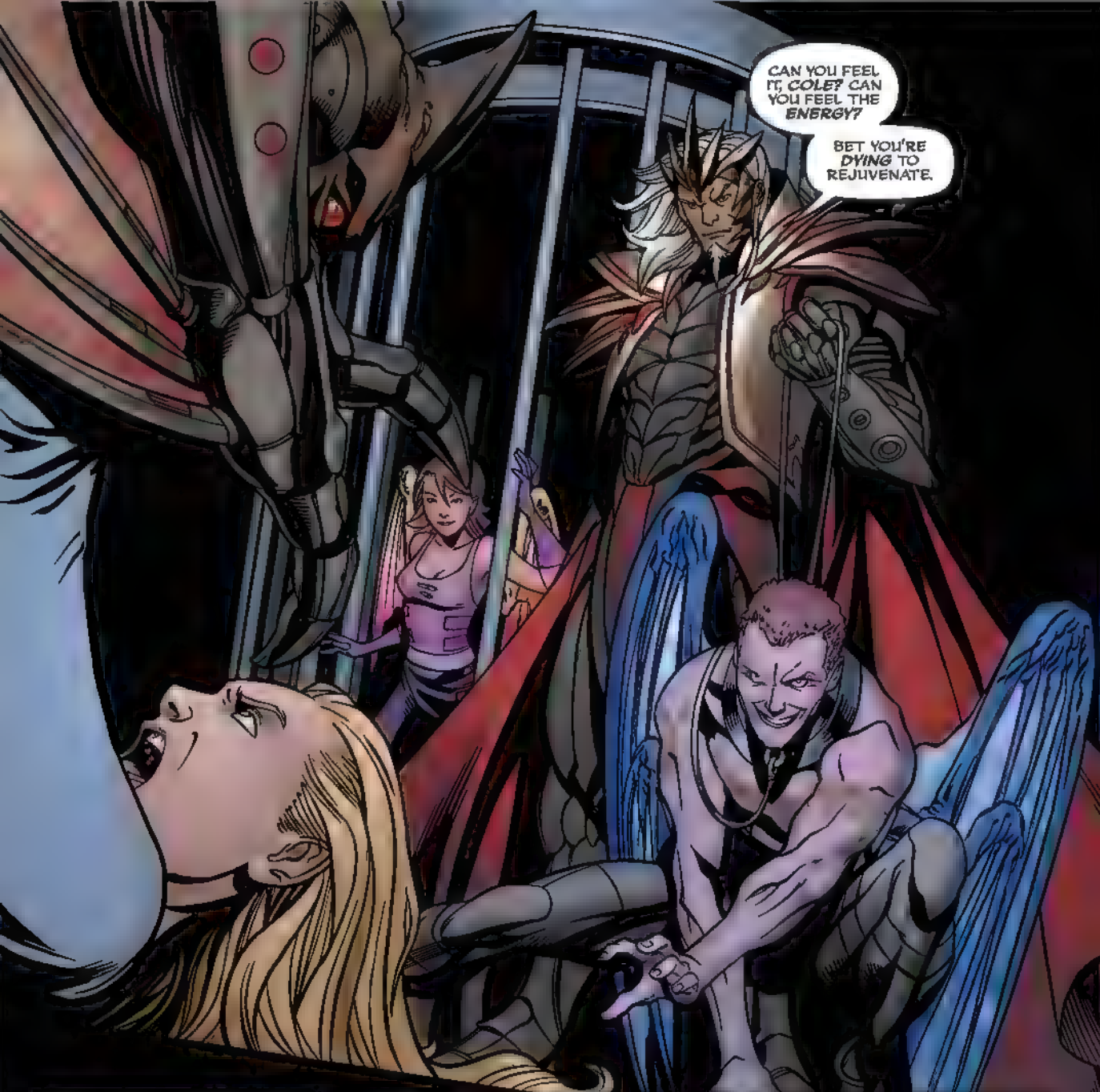
THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD HELP ME OUT, BUT ALL THAT POWER DOESN'T MEAN MUCH IF YOU NEVER USE IT.

NOW, TAKE RAINIER FOR INSTANCE. HE KNOWS HOW TO USE IT.



AND WHAT POWER HE LACKS, HE KNOWS HOW TO TAKE.







Noooooooo!

ASPEN
Vol. 2

#9

OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TUPNER'S
SOULFIRE™



SPE
Vol. 2

#9
OF 9
COVER A

SOUL FIRE



MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE



VOLUME TWO ISSUE NINE OF NINE

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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™ Vol. 2 Issue 9

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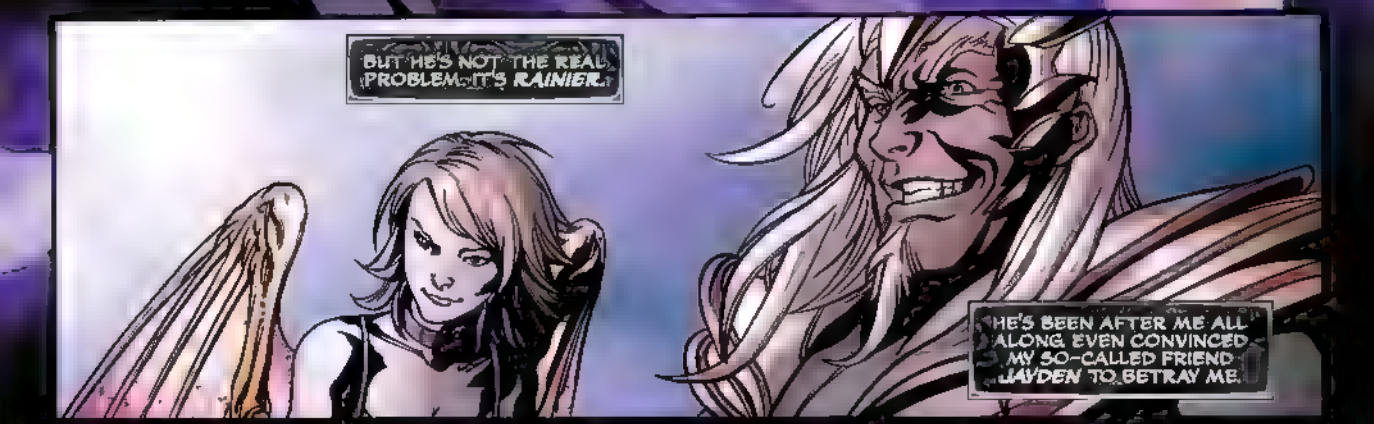
IT SEEMS LIKE ALL I
EVER WANTED WAS TO
BE SPECIAL— TO NOT
FEEL LIKE A NOBODY.



BUT IF I KNEW THE KIND
OF ATTENTION I'D DRAW
BEING THE SAMUSARA—
THE BRINGER OF LIGHT—

I MIGHT HAVE
RECONSIDERED BECAUSE
EVER SINCE I LEARNED OF
MY POWERS, I'VE BEEN
NOTHING BUT A TARGET.

THIS TATTOOED FREAK
IS NAMED COLE— AND
HE'S SIPHONING OFF MY
POWER— STEALING MY
ESSENCE, AND QUITE
POSSIBLY MY LIFE.



BUT HE'S NOT THE REAL
PROBLEM— IT'S RAINIER.

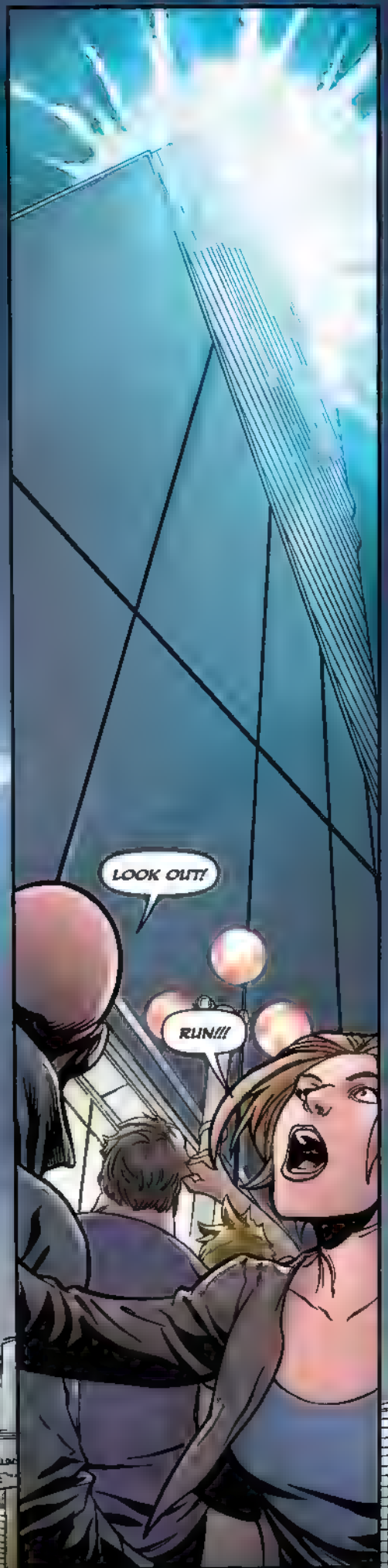
HE'S BEEN AFTER ME ALL
ALONG, EVEN CONVINCED
MY SO-CALLED FRIEND
JAYDEN TO BETRAY ME.

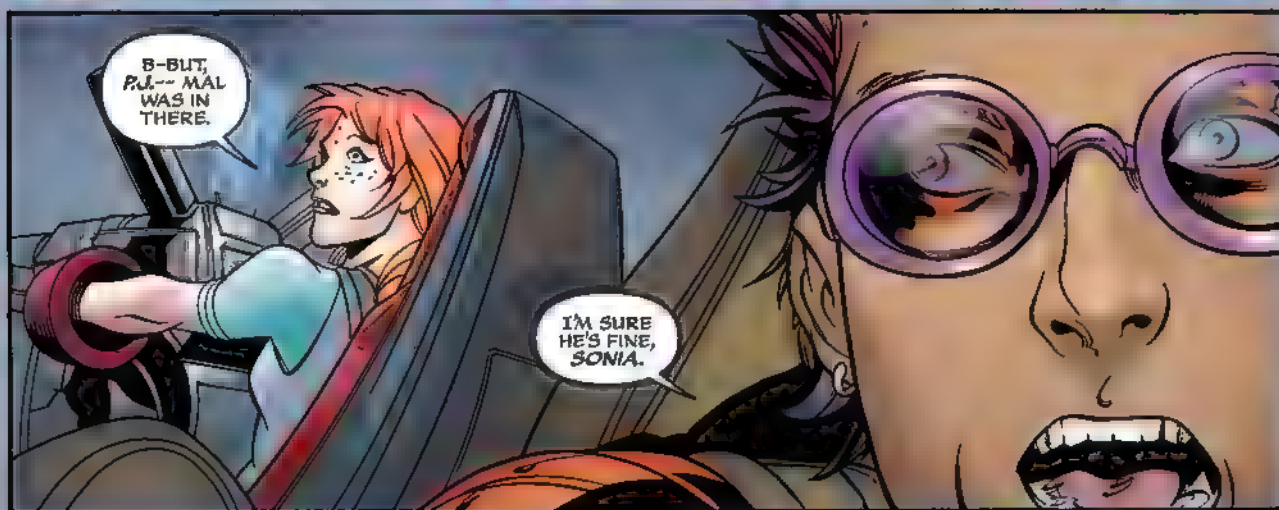
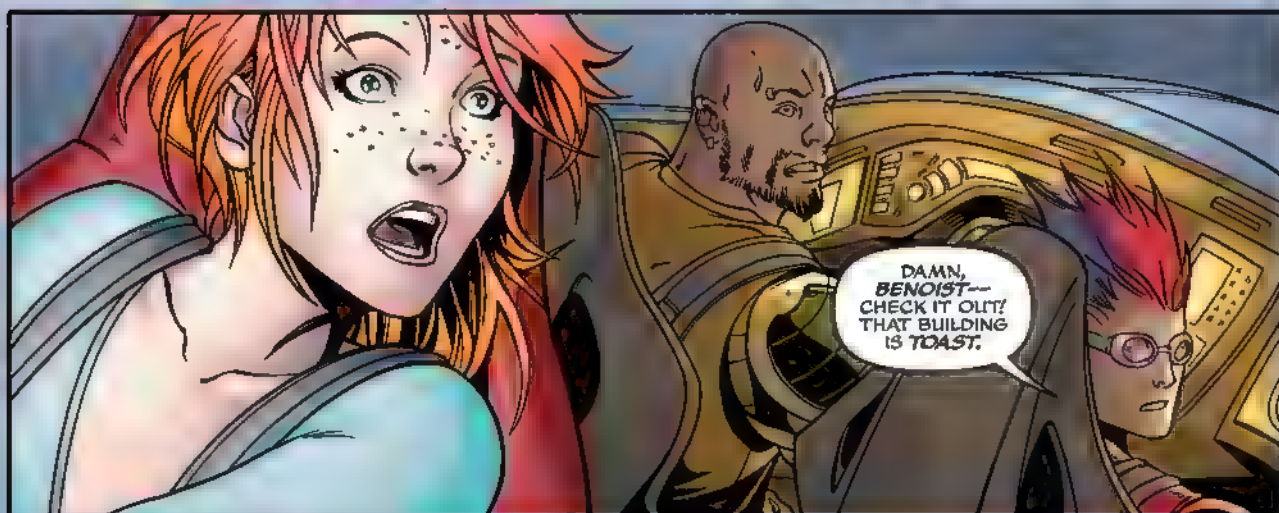
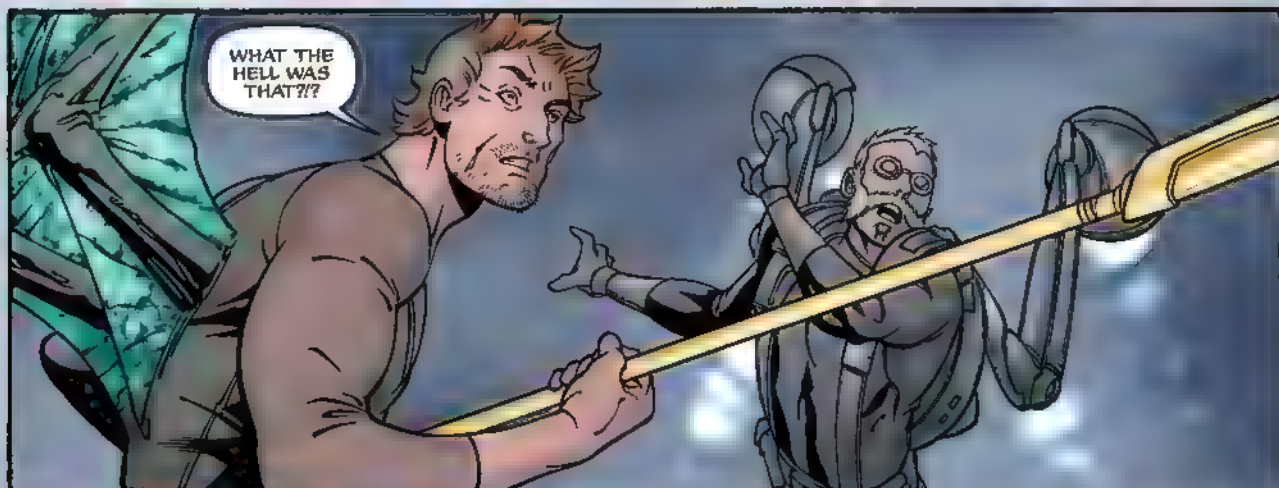
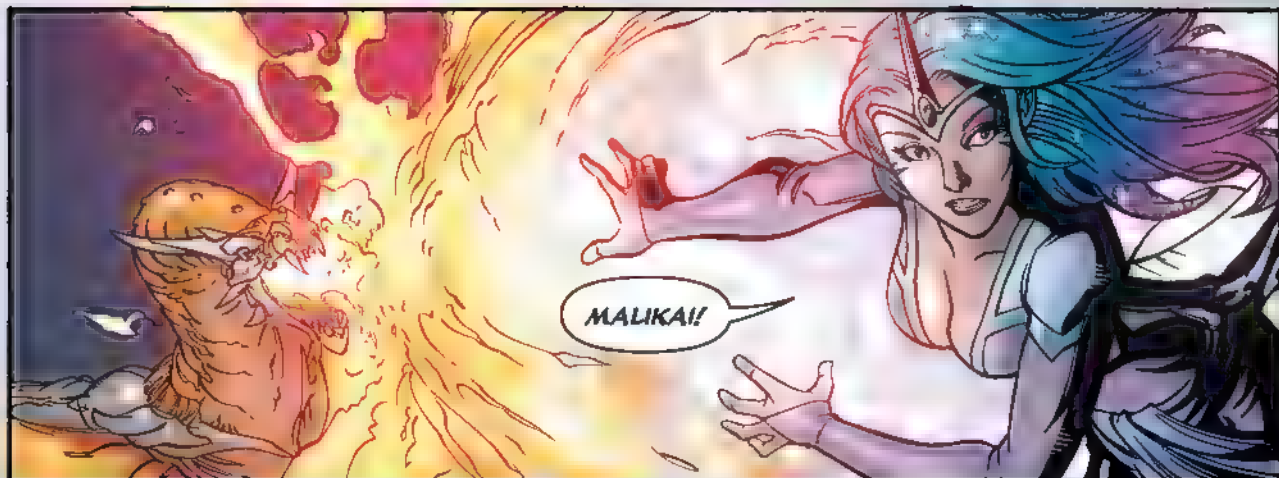


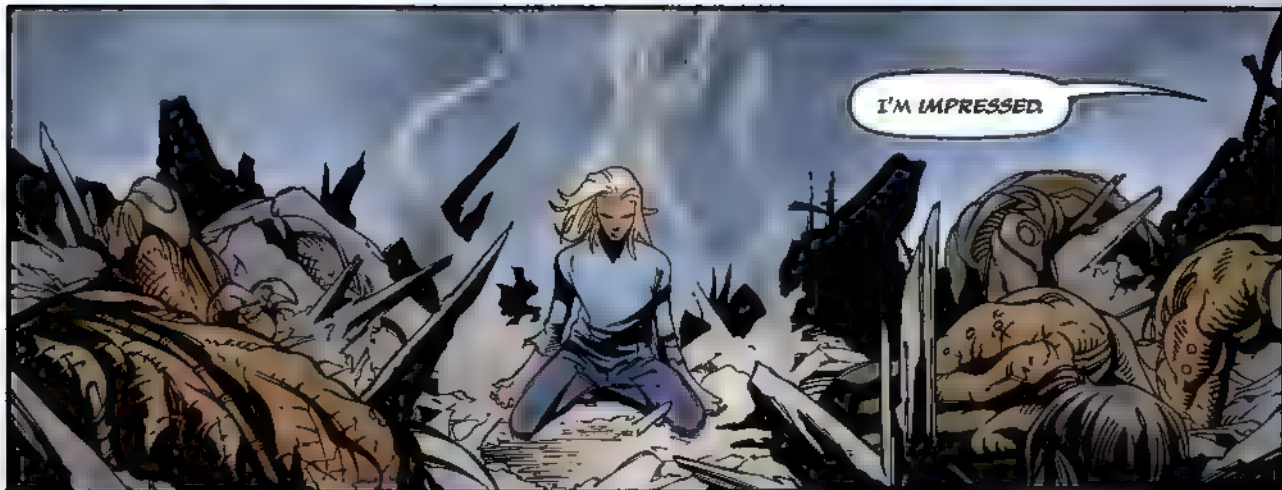
I SEE THE WAY THEY
ALL LOOK AT ME— LIKE
I'M WEAK... FINISHED.

THEY'RE DEAD
WRONG

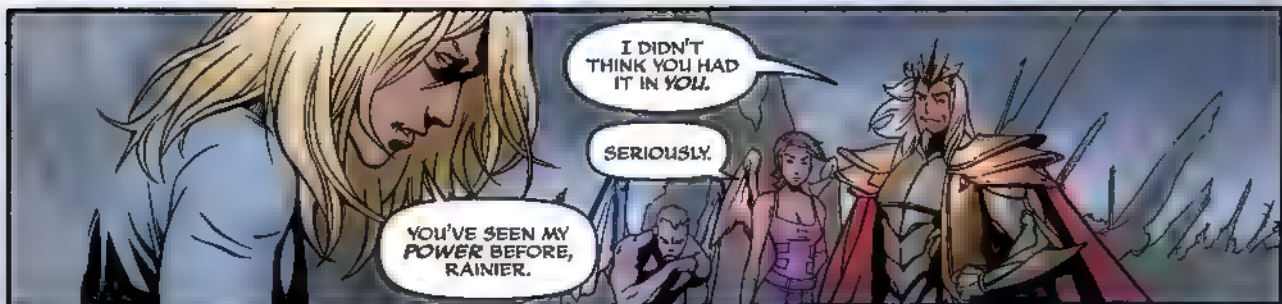








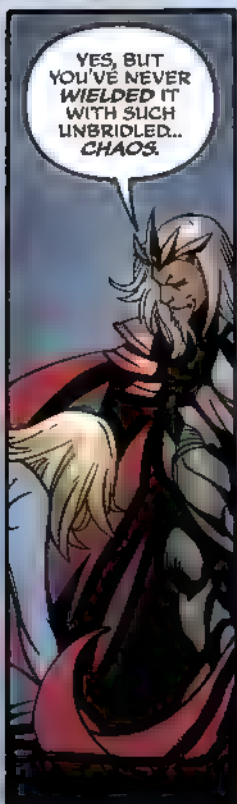
I'M IMPRESSED



I DIDN'T
THINK YOU HAD
IT IN YOU.

SERIOUSLY.

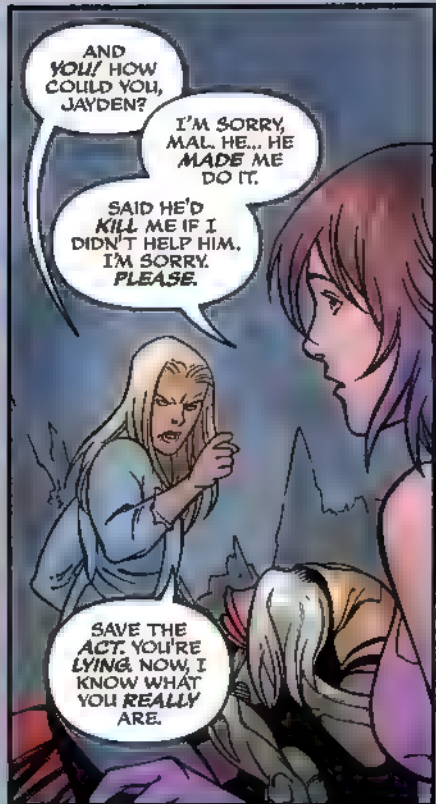
YOU'VE SEEN MY
POWER BEFORE,
RAINIER.



YES, BUT
YOU'VE NEVER
WIELDED IT
WITH SUCH
UNBRIDLED...
CHAOS.



SHUT
UP!



AND
YOU! HOW
COULD YOU,
JAYDEN?

I'M SORRY,
MAL. HE... HE
MADE ME
DO IT.

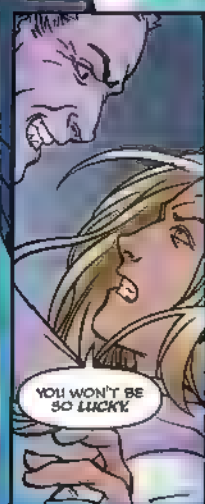
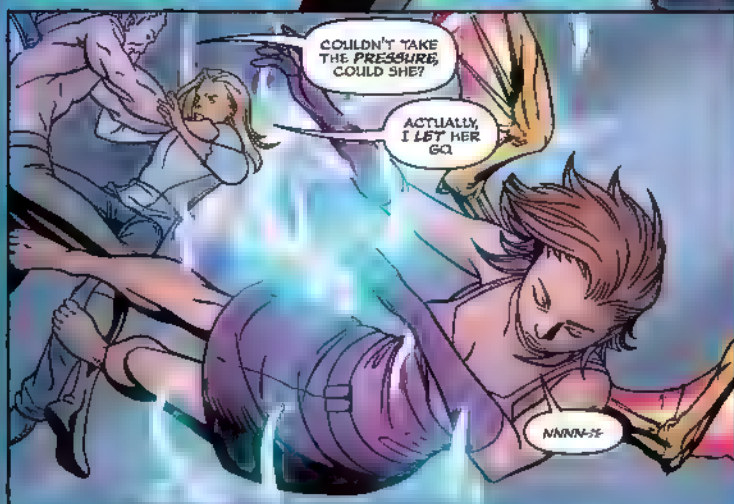
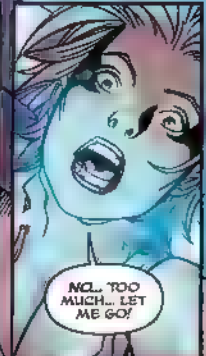
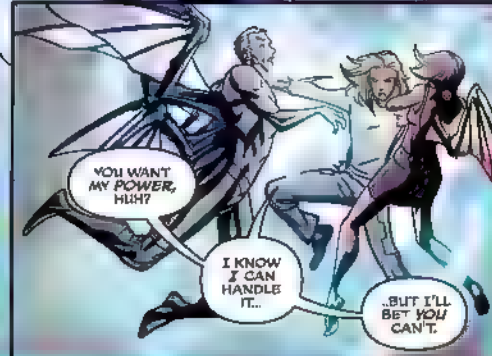
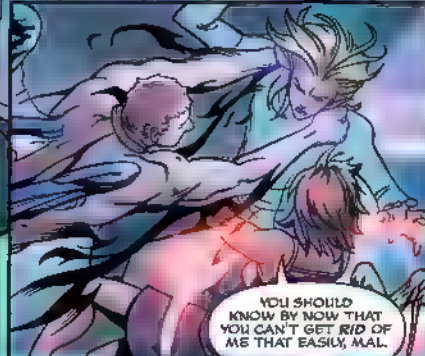
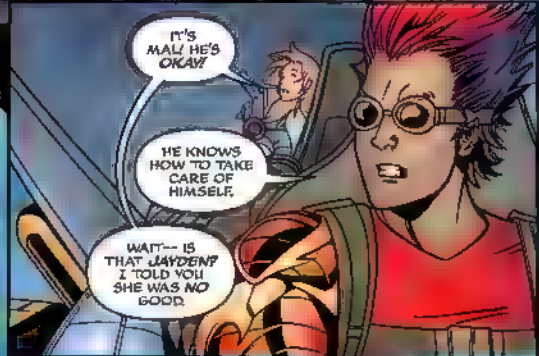
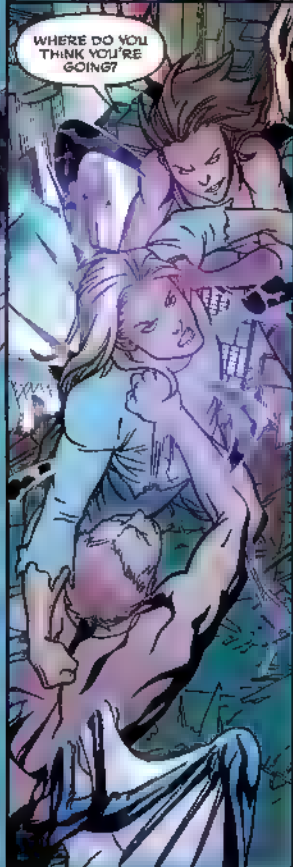
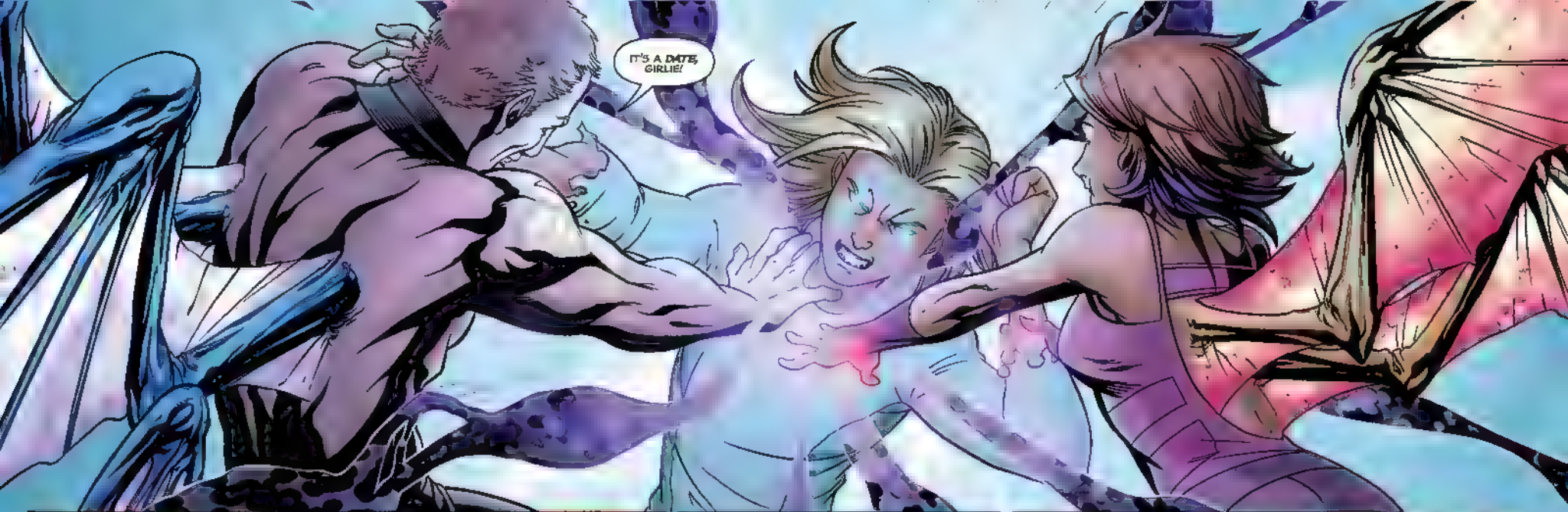
SAID HE'D
KILL ME IF I
DIDN'T HELP HIM.
I'M SORRY.
PLEASE.

SAVE THE
ACT. YOU'RE
LYING. NOW, I
KNOW WHAT
YOU REALLY
ARE.

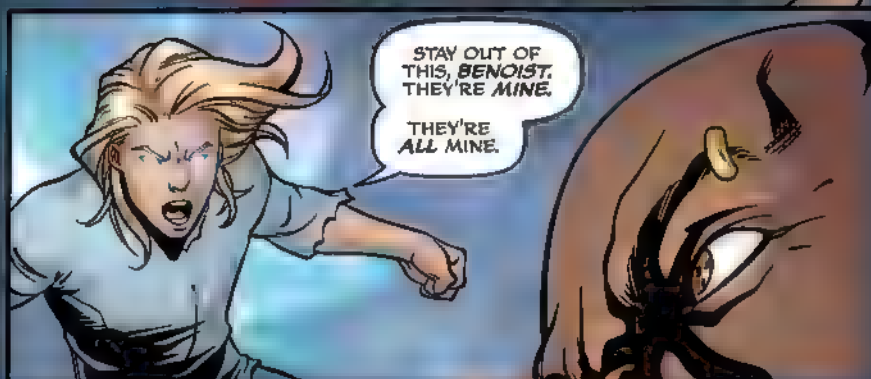


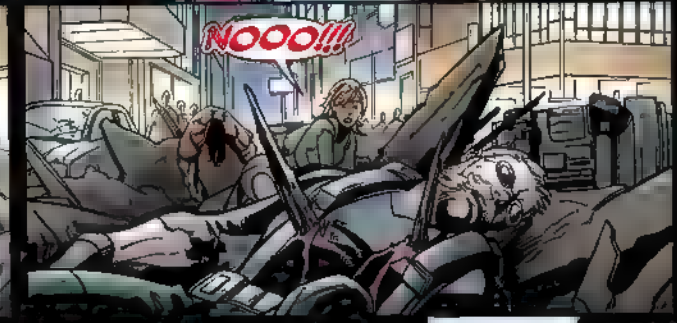
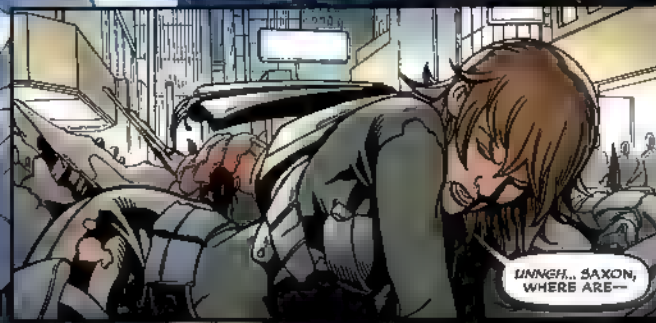
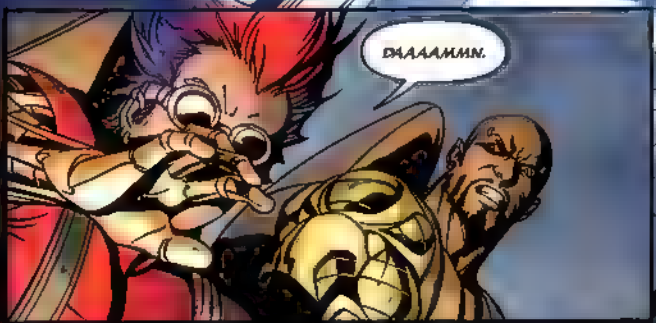
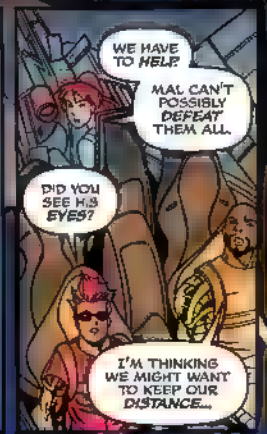
GOOD FOR YOU.
AND NOW THAT I
KNOW THAT I
KNOW WHAT YOU
REALLY ARE-- I'VE
NEVER WANTED
YOU MORE.

WHAT DO
YOU SAY, COLE?
DINNER FOR
TWO?





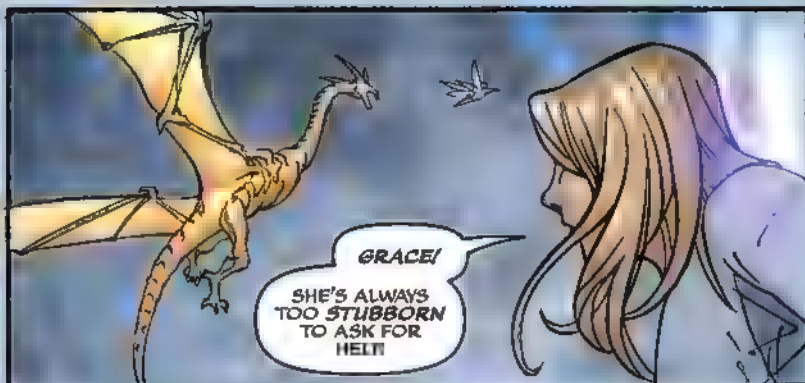






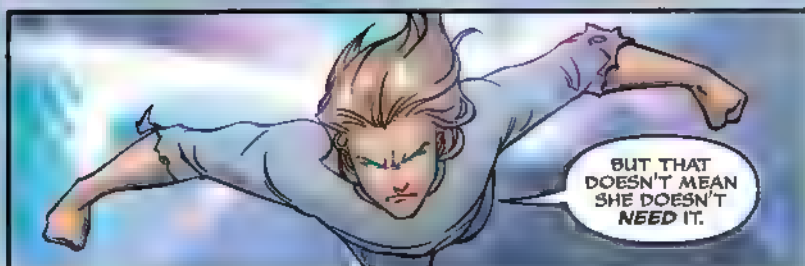
YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY
SAY...

...YOU MESS
WITH THE
BULL--

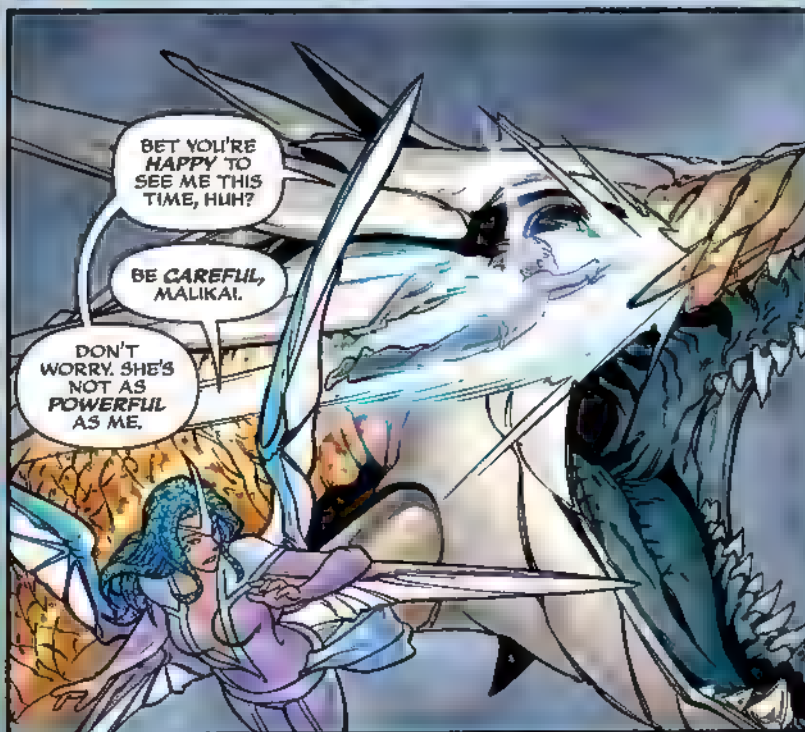


GRACE!

SHE'S ALWAYS
TOO **STUBBORN**
TO ASK FOR
HELP!



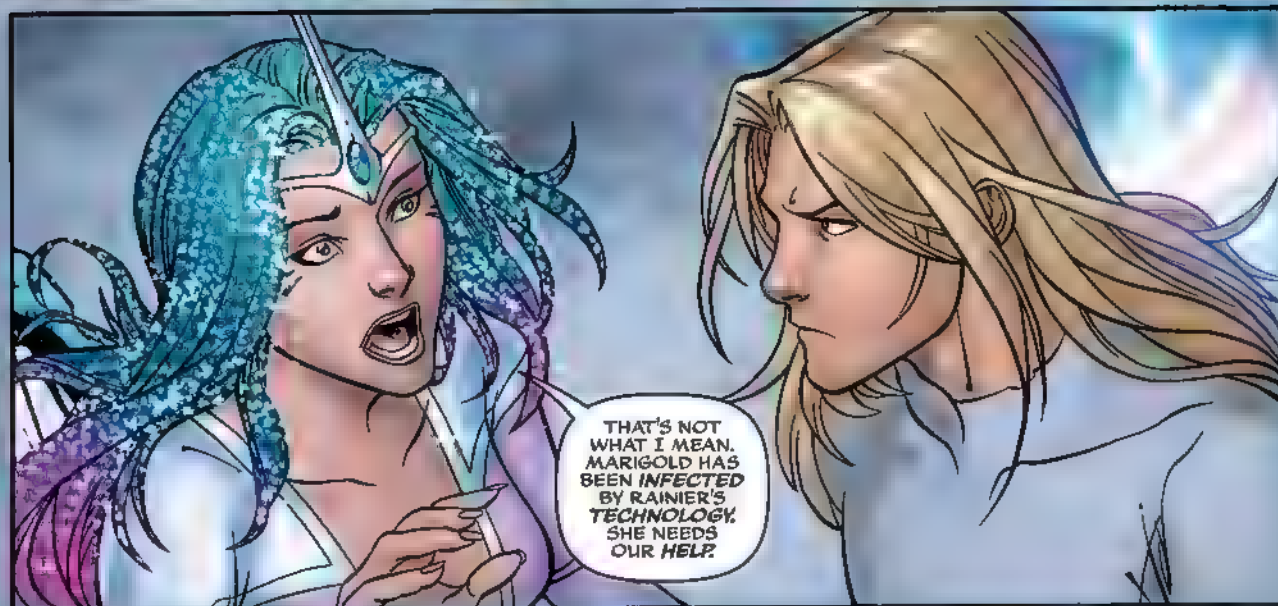
BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN
SHE DOESN'T
NEED IT.



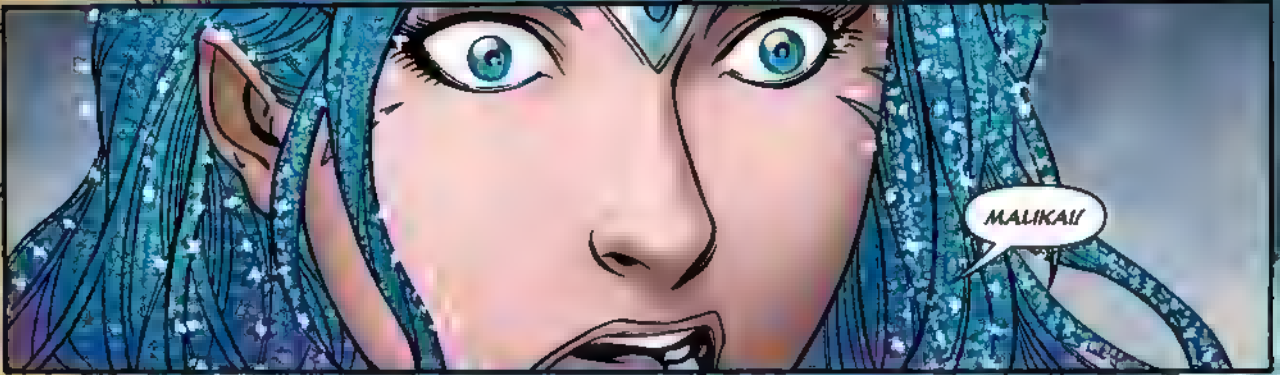
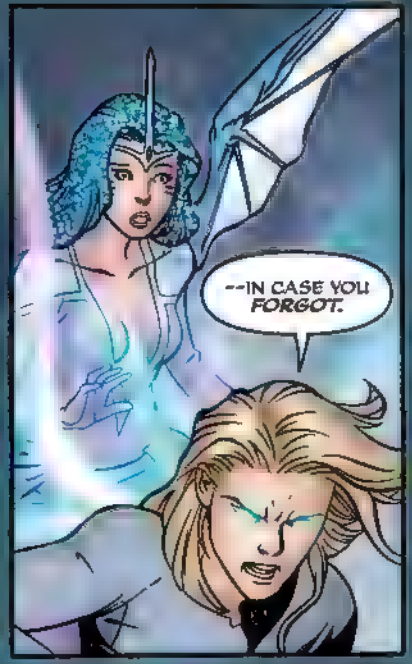
BET YOU'RE
HAPPY TO
SEE ME THIS
TIME, HUH?

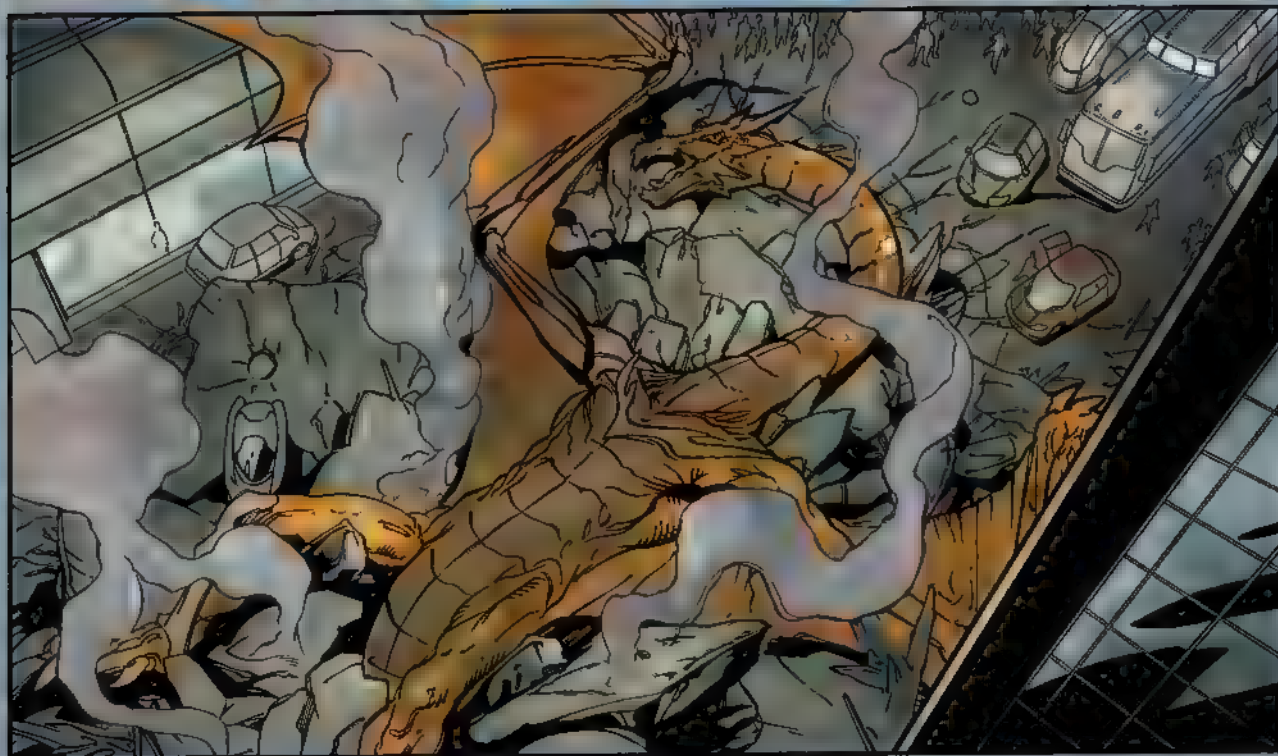
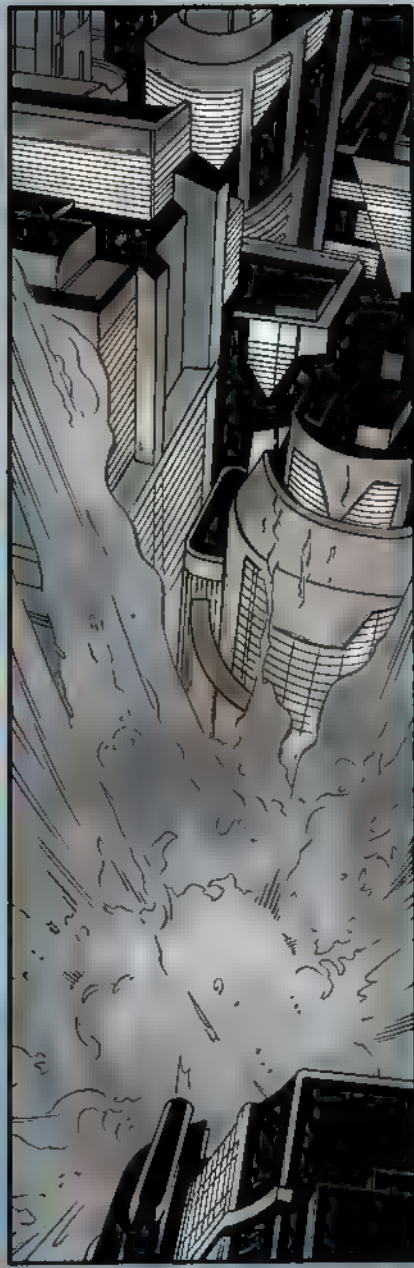
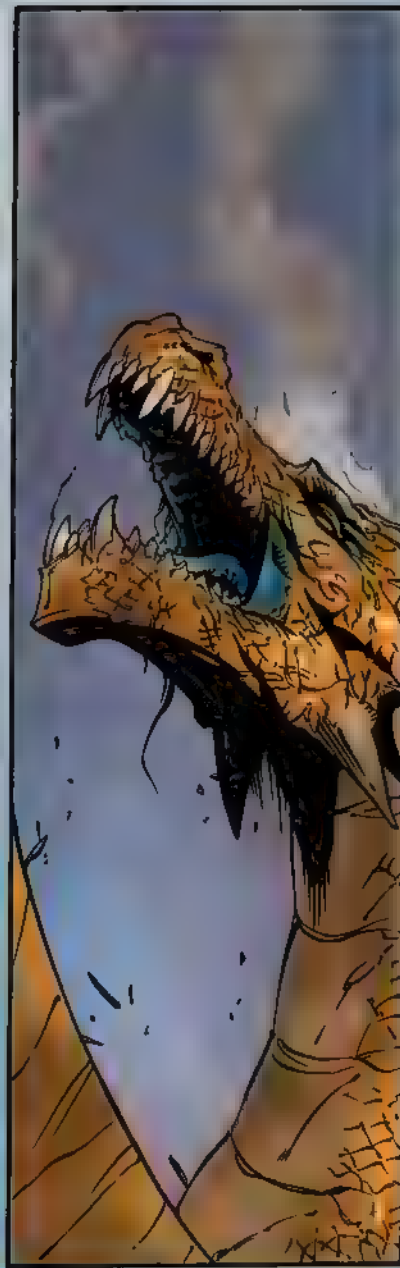
BE CAREFUL,
MALIKAI.

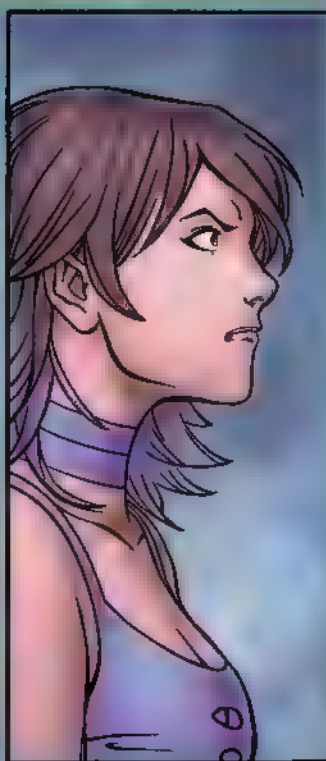
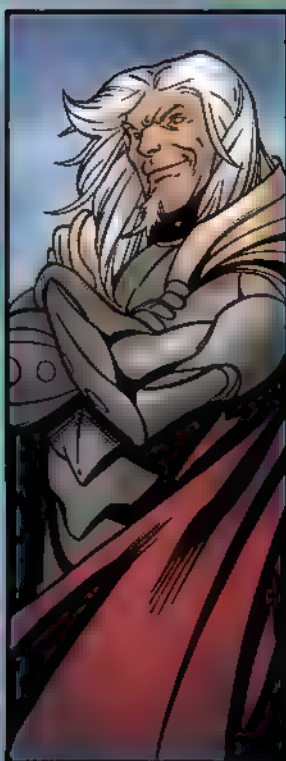
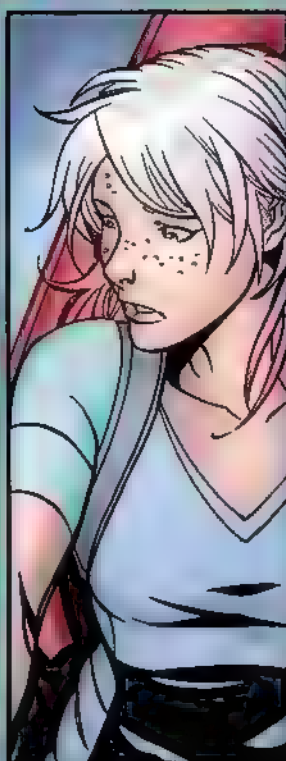
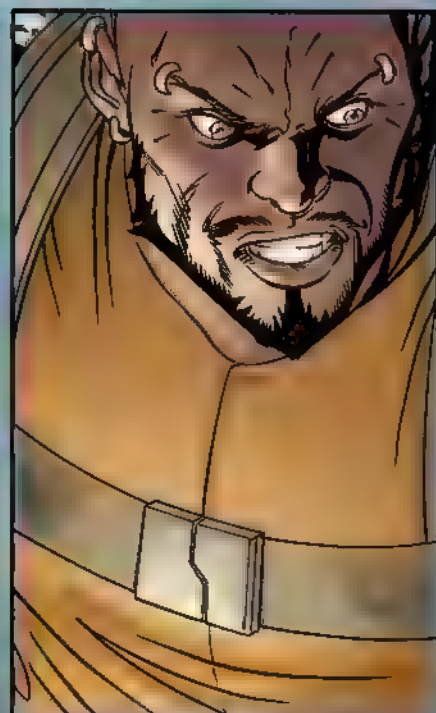
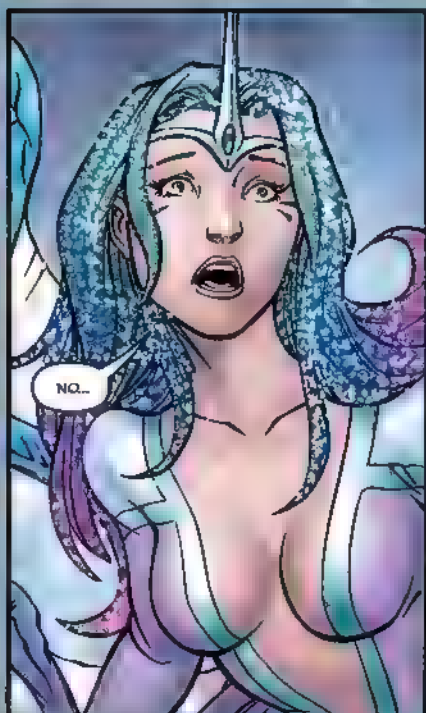
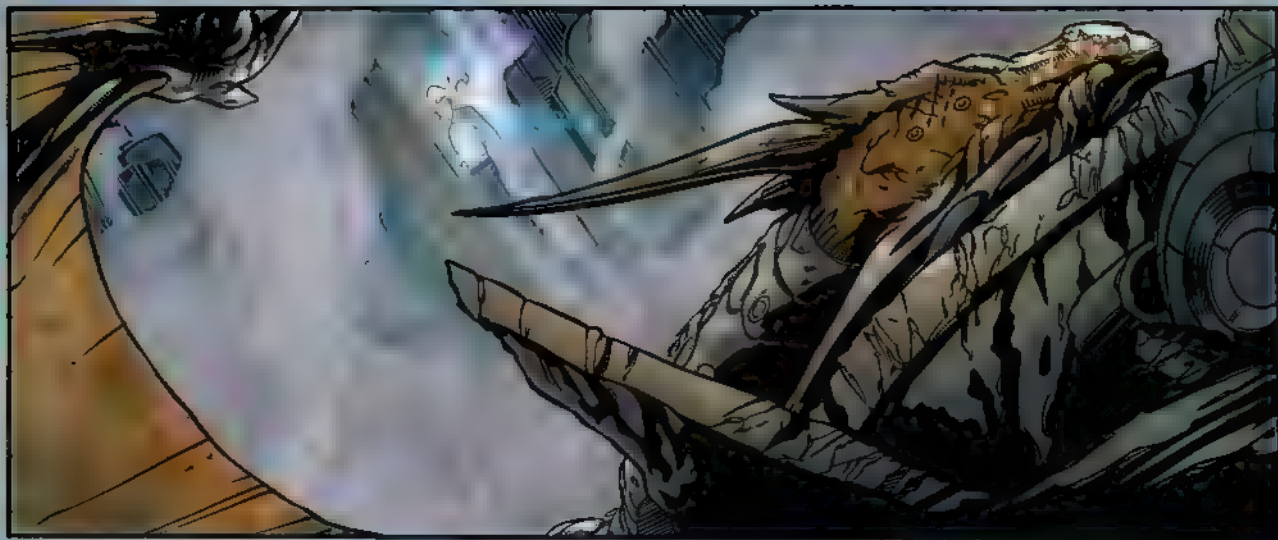
DON'T
WORRY. SHE'S
NOT AS
POWERFUL
AS ME.

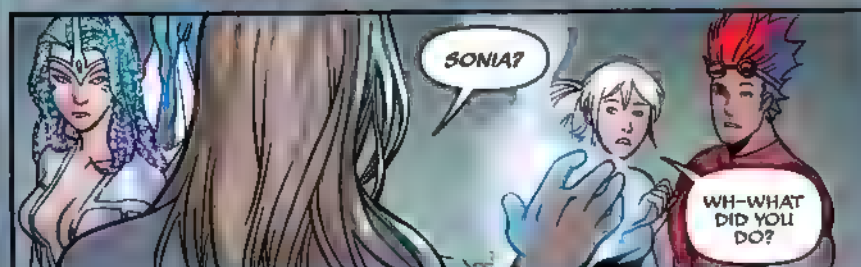


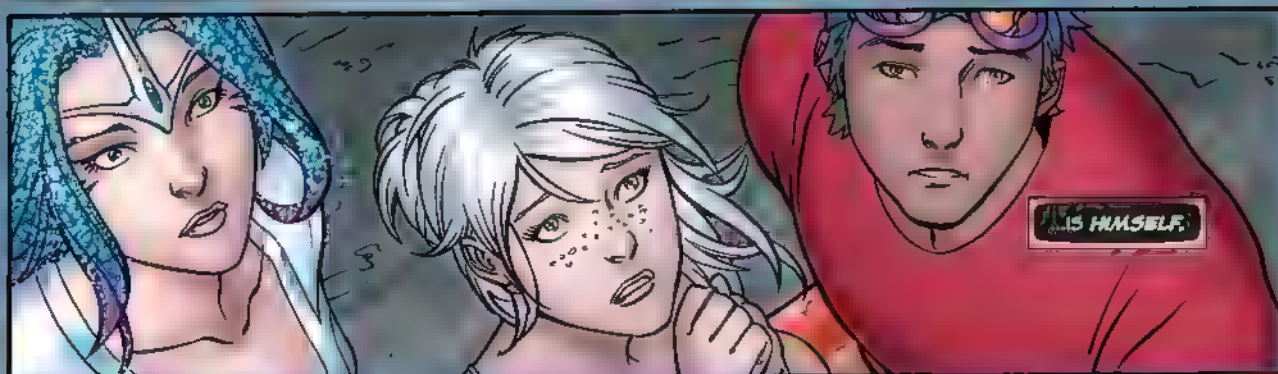
THAT'S NOT
WHAT I MEAN.
MARIGOLD HAS
BEEN **INFECTED**
BY RAINIER'S
TECHNOLOGY.
SHE NEEDS
OUR **HELP**.





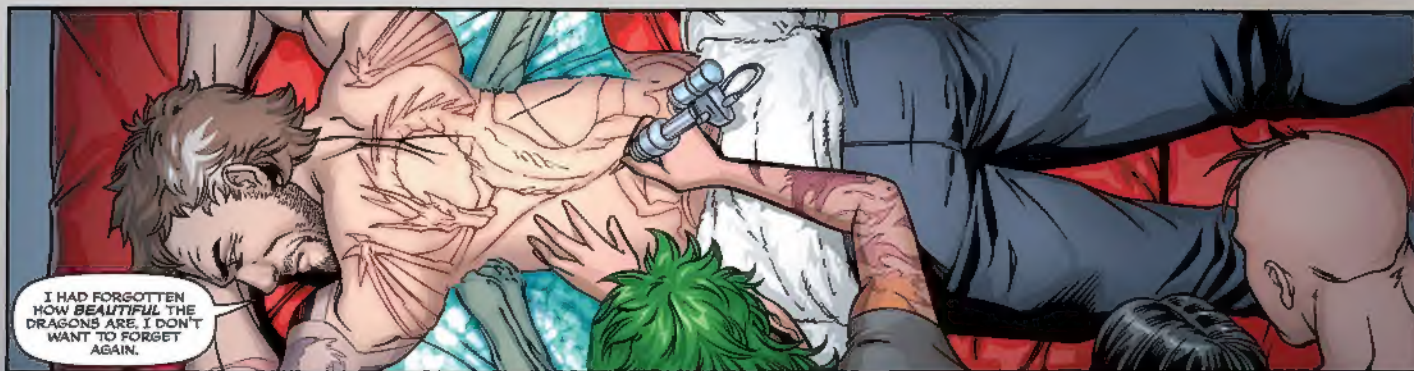








SO, DEX—
WHAT MADE YOU
CHANGE YOUR
MIND ABOUT
THE TATTOO?



I HAD FORGOTTEN
HOW BEAUTIFUL
THE DRAGONS ARE. I DON'T
WANT TO FORGET
AGAIN.



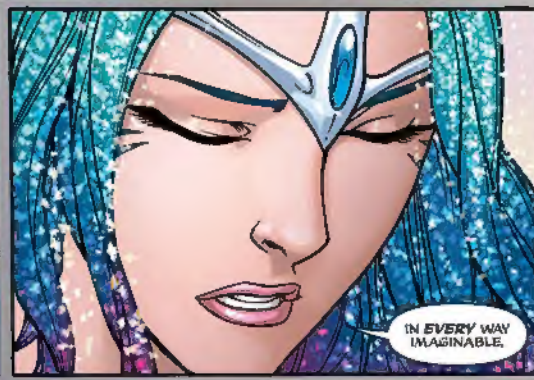
WELCOME
HOME, LITTLE
ONE.

YOUR
BROTHER
HAS BEEN
ASKING
FOR YOU.



WHAT HAPPENED
TO MARIGOLD?

SHE'S GONE. I
FAILED.



IN EVERY WAY
IMAGINABLE.



YO! PAPA
BEAR!



THINK YOU CAN
STOP HAMMERING
LONG ENOUGH FOR
SOME GRUB?

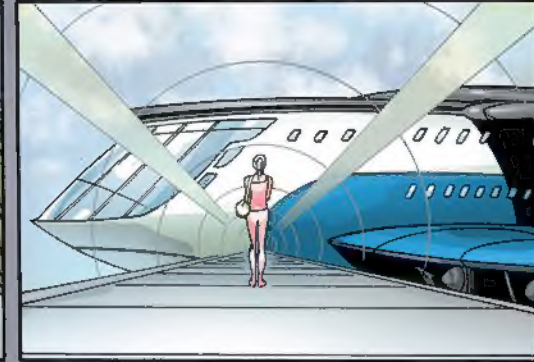
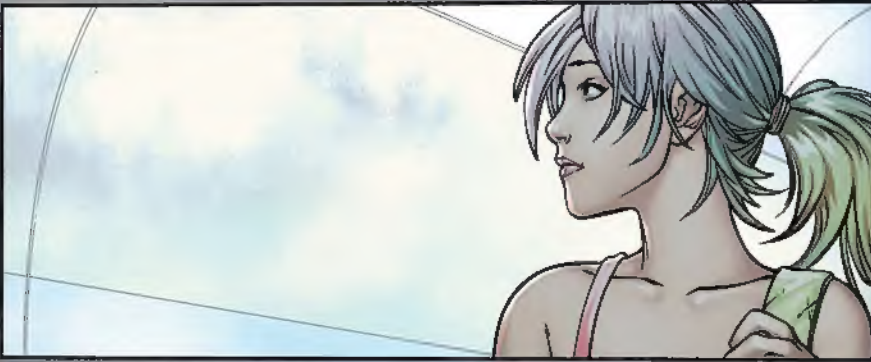
I GOT FISH
TACOS.



WHAT DID
I EVER DO
WITHOUT
YOU, P.J.?



FINAL
CALL FOR
FLIGHT
1122



I DON'T KNOW
WHAT GOT INTO
ME BACK IN SAN
FRANCISCO.

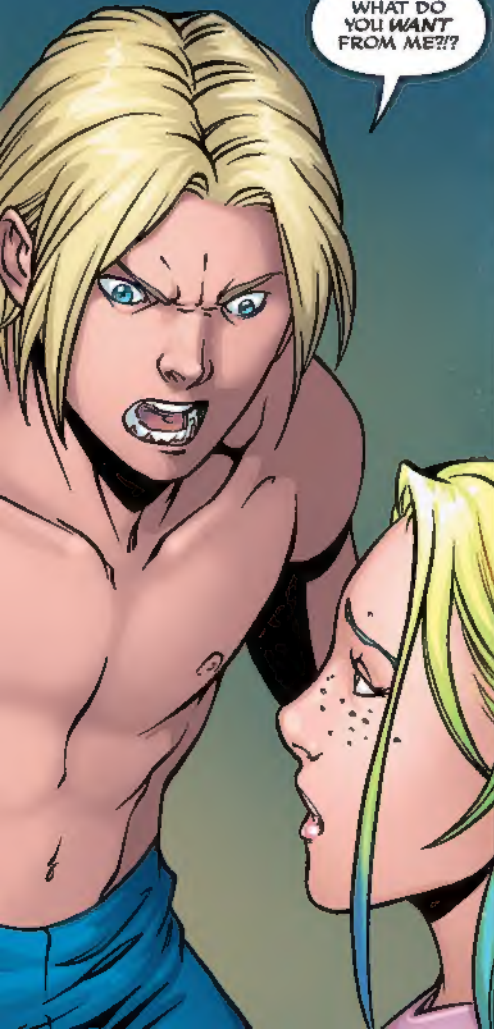


BACK
OFF!

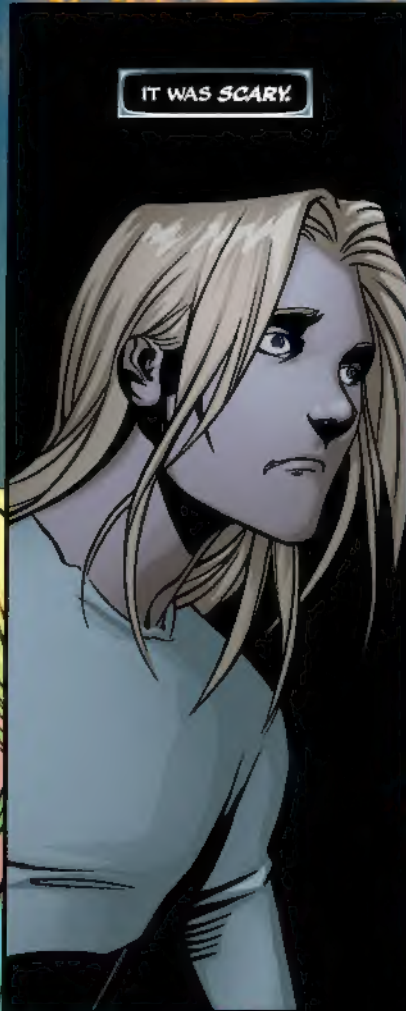
IT WAS LIKE
I COULDN'T
CONTROL
MYSELF.



WHAT DO
YOU WANT
FROM ME???



IT WAS SCARY.



DON'T
CALL ME
BOY!



